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HER MAJESTY'S TOWER.

VOL. III.

HER MAJESTY'S TOWER.

BY

WILLIAM HEPWORTH DIXON.

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VOLUME III.

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PREFACE.

THESE Volumes close one branch of the studies which have occupied my mind and pen for more than twenty years. The work is mainly based on new materials; down to 1688, on papers in the Record Office. But I have not cared to fret my reader by a dozen references in every page to Pipe-rolls, Doquets, Warrant-books, and Council-registers.

In every stage of this work I have received the help of Sir Thomas Hardy and his able staff. Miss Burdett Coutts has lent me her pamphlets and caricatures; and John E. Gardner, Esq. has placed his great Collection — including six folio volumes by Lysons — in my hands. My warmest thanks are due to these good friends.

6 ST. JAMES'S TERRACE,
New Year's Day, 1871.

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HER MAJESTY'S TOWER.

CHAPTER I.

A FAVOURITE.

In the crowd which pressed round the block in Palace Yard to see Raleigh die, no man took more of the sacred fire than John Eliot, of Port Eliot, on Lynher Creek. Eliot was then a man of untried power and silent tongue; an idler of the Park, the cock-pit, and the bowling alley; spending much of his time, and laying up most of his hope, in Buckingham's ante-rooms. A few years later he was to grow renowned, in a land of orators and fighting-men, for gift of speech and pride of spirit; to link his name with that of English liberty; to pine and perish in Raleigh's cell. The story of his passage from Palace Yard to the Bloody tower, is that of the drama, which from scene to scene, and year by year, gave Suffolk,

Arundel, Bacon, Coke, and Williams to the Tower; Buckingham to the knife; and Wentworth, Laud, and Charles, to the headsman's axe.

When Eliot stood in Palace Yard to see Raleigh die, his friend George Villiers was at his best; and such a youth as Villiers at his best is rarely to be seen in this nether world.

In form, the man was like a god. Spare, tall, and straight, his frame combined a rare degree of strength with lines of perfect grace. Few men could ride so fast, could leap so high, could dance so long, as he; and no man in the court could ride, and leap, and dance with such unstudied ease. His hand was small and white; a lady's hand, with taper fingers, ending in filbert nails; and yet his grip on sword and rein was close and tight. His head was finely formed and firmly set. Young women were afraid to look at him, and painters sighed and said they could not paint his face. A sly, unconscious gaiety flowed about him. In the galleries of White Hall, he played his part of light comedian in a way to have made his fortune at the Globe. He was the genius and embodiment of Youth.

By dress, by speech, by way of life, this fair outside was framed like a work of art. Composed

of richest silk and velvet pile, his clothes were all but hidden under ropes of pearl. The buttons on his coat were precious stones. He wore a diamond cockade, with diamonds sewn into his belt and bands. His sword, his spurs, his plumes, were all alight with gems. One suit of unshorn, cloak and jacket, cost no less than eighty thousand pounds. Nearly all his wealth, when he was one of the richest men at court, was heaped upon his back.

To wit and learning he had no pretence; and yet his talk had charms, not only for the pages and courtiers who were bound to listen, but for men who were the lords of human speech. Bacon loved to see him; Abbott lent him an attentive ear. He knew the light things of the world; his heart was gay; his voice was winning; and his talk was bright with prank and jest. A smile sat on his face. His words were always smooth, his manners always soft. He hated to say No, and he could never say that word to one he loved. When he was spoken to, he flushed into a girl-like pink; and well-worn sinners said, when first they saw him, that he was too good a child to thrive in courts.

King James had seen this prodigal of nature

once without being struck; for James was dull of sight; and like a fish, he needed to be dazzled and excited by the bait. The second time, his eye was taken and his heart secured. The scene was Cambridge, and the bait a play; that macaronic comedy by George Ruggles, called 'Ignoramus,' in which the lawyers are put to shame, while wits and scholars bear away the bell; a piece of humour which pleased the King and drove the lawyers mad; which Ellesmere stooped to notice at the Council board, and Selden to refute in his work on Tithes. James thought this play a compliment to himself; he being the first of scholars and the best of wits! He saw it many times, for he disliked the Inns of Court, and loved to hear his lawyers well abused; but never had comedy made so great a hit as 'Ignoramus' made that night. While James was rolling in his chair, and clapping hands, and laughing till the tears ran down his cheeks, the young comedian came upon the stage, all blushing like a rose. James could not take his eyes from that joyous face and from those dainty limbs. 'What think you of him?' he turned and asked. 'Too bashful for a court,' replied Lord Arundel. James called the actor to his closet, patted him on the cheek, and

asked him who his father was, and where that father lived.

The lad had nothing much to boast beyond his shining face and his comic powers.

George Villiers was the younger son of a country knight and a lady's maid; the country knight, Sir George Villiers, of Brooksby, near Melton Mowbray; the lady's maid, Mary Beaumont, of no place in particular; though in after times, when she had peerages and pensions to give away, no end of people claimed her as their kin. She was an old man's fancy, and his second wife. Some people say she was a scullery wench, until the amorous knight induced his wife to lift her from the kitchen to an upper-room, to dress her in more decent garb, and give her the station of a lady's maid. When Lady Villiers died, her pretty maid was quickly in her shoes.

Old crones had told her 'fortune,' and a wonderful fortune it proved to be. A second brood was soon about the old man's knee; John, George, Kit, Susan; and he saw but dimly how these darlings could be fed. His house and land were settled on William, his eldest son; and when his house and land were gone, the little left would hardly have kept his widow from the street. The

old man laid in the earth, she had to front the world with her lovely face, her four small children, and her couple of hundred pounds a-year. She was a Parent, with a duty to perform. The children must have bread, and how was she to buy them bread? Was not her beauty worth its price? Had not the crones, in whom she trusted, told her that many would go mad for her? She put her beauty up for sale. One Rayner bid for it; an old man, rich in money and frail in health. She took him at his word; but he was not so rich as she had hoped, and when he fell asleep she looked more warily for a richer mate.

Sir Thomas Compton was a younger brother of that Lord Compton of Compton, who had married the greatest fortune of those times. A 'little man,' a 'drunkard,' and a 'fool,' Sir Thomas was the butt of his county, and the make-sport of his village-green. But what were such things to a Parent, with her four small children to feed and clothe? She knew that he was rich, and that was enough for her. The match was most unhappy for Sir Thomas, who had every reason to be jealous of his wife. Ere many months of his married life were spent, his neighbours changed his

title from Sir Thomas Compton to Sir Thomas Cuckold.

With men Sir Thomas might be egged into display of spirit. One Captain Bird, a roaring fellow, put such shame on him that every one told him—as a joke—that he must call the Captain out. 'What!' cried the pigmy, 'fight him?' 'Even so,' his neighbours said, each eager for a piece of fun; 'a man could only die once, and it was better to fall in a good cause, sword in hand, than to be spurned and flouted like a dog.' It was like asking Master Stephen to send a cartel of defiance to Captain Bobadil. But nervous terror often makes men bold. A note was sent, and Bird, amused by such a cartel, answered that since the choice of ground and weapons lay with him, he would fight in a saw-pit, and with swords, in order that the cuckold should not run away! The two men stript to fight, and dropt into the pit. Bird waved his sword above his head in mockery, crying, 'Now, Compton, thou shalt not escape me; come, let's see what thou canst do!' on which the pigmy, seeing his adversary's point in the air, rushed in below his guard, and ran him through the ribs. Bird instantly fell dead.

But he had no such courage with his wife.

This lovely creature dealt in charms and spells, and mortal daring failed against her demoniac arts. She kept a 'devil,' in the shape of Doctor Lamb: a darling of fine ladies and their foolish lords, whose money he embezzled and whose honour he betrayed. This wretch, astrologer, enchanter, secret poisoner, became her 'father' in the science; teaching her magic and the seven arts; mixing powders and potions to intoxicate her lord, and helping her to physic and to form her sons. She meant these lads to rise as she had risen. She brought them up for marriage. Never at school herself, she had a poor conceit of learning, as the 'beggar's portion' in a court; but she was quick to see the charms of dress, of easy manner, and of fluent grace in speech. A year of France would help her darlings more than twenty years at Oxford; and in this belief she decked her stupid John and handsome George in lace and sword, and sent them with a servant into France. When George came back, the gloze and sheen of Paris on his handsome face, he had to find his bread, assisted by the tipsy pigmy, by the handsome and licentious woman who had married three men for money, and by the dissolute charlatan, Doctor Lamb.

His fortune had been quickly found, and day by day the King grew fonder of him. 'All that sat in the council,' James profanely mumbled, 'looking on him, saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel;' and because the lad was fair, he gave him the name of Stephen—as he called it, 'Steenie'—from the saint. One week before the comedy, Villiers had been met on the race-course in a faded suit of black, the doublet seamed and bare; a few days later he was a knight, a gentleman of the bedchamber, and a pensioner with a thousand pounds a-year. The enemies of Carr became his friends. Lady Bedford gave him money; Lake procured him place. Pembroke and Arundel took him up; Archbishop Abbott called him son; and Bacon gave him sage advice. A word was sent to him from Raleigh's cell. All those who feared Northampton and his patron Carr, combined in his support. The Parent, strong in her belief in sorcery, consulted Doctor Lamb. The Somersets had the help of Forman; she would meet their devilish arts with darker and more potent spells. She brought the sorcerer to her son, as one who could rule his planets and confound his foes. Lamb soon became familiar in his house, and the young actor learned

to bend over magic crystals, and to see his future in a puff of smoke.

Queen Anne was much against him: that neglected Queen being sick of lads with scented locks and mincing gait, who seemed in her honest eyes neither men nor women; but the good Archbishop, her prudent counsellor, brought Queen Anne to take his side. The youth was dubbed Sir George in the Queen's own bedroom at her personal request. From that hour he was not so much a favourite as an idol of the court:—the visible spirit of its gaiety, its pleasure, and its youth.

No week had passed since he was dubbed a knight that had not seen him graced by royal gift—a chace, a lodge, a manor, a monopoly, a star, a badge, a title, or a place; and only four years from the day when he was met on Cambridge race-course in a worn-out coat, this lucky youth was Baron, Viscount, Earl, and Marquis. Never, save in Eastern fable, where the jester rises from his shawl a pasha, had comedian won such honours in so short a time.

CHAPTER II.

A FAVOURITE'S FRIEND.

ELIOT was twenty-eight years old when Raleigh fell, and through the favour of his friend at court he had been dubbed Sir John.

These friends had youth, health, animal spirits, love of sport in common, and the accidents of life had thrown them for a time together in their early years. They had the foils and differences which make young friendships charming. George was light and John was grave. George was keen and hasty; John was stern and patient. George was quick to quarrel, to forgive, and to forget; while John was slow to take offence, but having taken it was slower to forgive and to forget. They loved the prisoner in the Tower. Villiers had been able to do that prisoner good; not only by refusing to accept of Sherborne Castle, but by speaking for him to the King when every one else had failed, and gaining a re-

luctant leave for him to sail on his voyage to the Mine of Gold. If Eliot had less power to serve, he nursed a sterner anger in his heart towards Raleigh's foes.

A man of the western country, born near Plymouth Sound, accustomed from his birth to boats and waves, he looked to a stormy and adventurous life. By nature quick and hardy, he had much of the vice, and most of the virtue, of a buccaneer; as buccaneers had lived and rioted from the days of Admiral Drake to those of Captain Ward. His youth had been somewhat wild; and he was said to have spent his coin as heedlessly as he was willing to spill his blood. Before he had passed his fifteenth year, he startled the western gentry by his reckless deeds; and on his neighbour, John Moyle, a gentleman of position in the county, speaking to his father on the subject, he had drawn his sword, and thrust the blade into that neighbour's side. Here was a spirit for the Spanish Main!

A stout walker, a sure bowler, a good shot, he loved to spend his time afield, and found his chief delight in what are called manly sports. Though sent to Oxford for the usual terms, he left his college without having taken a degree in arts. On

passing from Exeter College to the Inns of Court, he only glanced at law; and then procured a license to travel into foreign parts. In France he met George Villiers, then a boy of seventeen summers, with his fortunes all to seek; and there this grave, fierce youth had spent some time in travel with that frolicsome boy.

At first, the profit of their friendship was on Villiers' side; for Eliot was the elder and richer lad; and John, although he could not boast of so fine a face as George, could certainly claim to have far the stronger head. How fast their fates were knit and bound, no sorcerer could then foretell. They met; and they were not to part. For good and evil days their fate was one; a clasp of love succeeded by a hug of hate, till death itself divided them; on this side by a jailor's bolt, on that side by a murderer's knife.

When Eliot came from France, he found his father dead, Port Eliot all his own. After making his peace with Moyle, he gave his love to Rhadagund Gedies, a neighbour's only child; and was elected to a seat in the House of Commons for St. Germans; but his passion was the sea, in preference to either courtly or domestic life. His countrymen were sailors. Raleigh, Gilbert, Drake,

were western born; and Eliot, as he thought of these men, turned his eyes to the fleets in Plymouth Sound. Sitting in the House a silent member, no one dreamed that under that calm outside there lay such depths and furies of volcanic fire. Judged as men saw him in those early days, John Eliot seemed more likely to brave the ocean than to lead debates; to find his foemen in some desperate Don Lepantos, not in petulant Villierses and sickly Wentworths; and to fall in headlong fight, his foot upon a Spanish deck, not waste his strength and yield his life with saint-like patience in the Bloody tower.

The prize on which he fixed his heart was the flag of Vice-Admiral in his native seas. A Vice-Admiral, holding his powers from the Lord Admiral, not from the Sovereign, had to keep the ports in order and the channels free; to watch for pirates, to impress the sailors, and to guard the flag. A Commodore, a Secretary, and a Judge in one, he had to board suspicious craft, to draw up rules of seizure, and to settle what was lawful prize. A Vice-Admiral of Devon was a great man in the west.

This post had been held in recent years by Sir Arthur Champernoon (Raleigh's uncle), by

Sir Richard Hawkins, by Sir Christopher Harris; and was then held, under Charles, the great Earl of Nottingham, by Sir Lewis Stukeley, Raleigh's infamous cousin, captain, and betrayer. This base fellow, after stealing his patron's money, and helping to swear away that patron's life, had fallen under such a weight of public scorn, that James, with every wish to stand his friend, could not support him against the storm of public wrath. As men walked home from Palace Yard, they spoke of Stukeley as the Judas of our race. The wretch had sold his master; sold him for a royal beck and a bag of gold. 'Sir Judas Stukeley' was a phrase on every lip, and not a lip in London dropt that name without a curse. Sir Judas went to court, and no man spake to him. He waited on great people, and the servants of great people told him to begone. On every side he heard a hiss of 'perjurer' and 'villain.' Then, as odium grew around him, he repaired to James, for whom he had lost his soul, and offered to be sworn on the sacred bread and wine, that what he had said against the murdered man was true. 'Why, then,' replied the King, 'the more malicious he to utter these speeches at his death.' A Master of the Hounds, who was standing by and heard

him, cried with honest heat, 'Let the King take off Stukeley's head, as he hath done the other's; and let him at his death take the sacrament, and his oath upon it, and I'll believe it; otherwise, I shall credit Sir Walter Raleigh's bare affirmative against a thousand of his oaths.' Sir Judas called at the Earl of Nottingham's house to speak on business; but the Lord High Admiral passed his Vice without a nod. Abashed for a moment only, Judas strode to his illustrious chief, and tried to speak. The Earl was eighty-three years old; a prince in rank, a gentleman in speech; but when his eye fell on the wretch, he broke into a passionate rage. 'What!' cried the noble sailor, 'thou base fellow—thou! who art the scorn and contempt of men—how darest thou offer thyself in my presence? Were it not in mine own house, I would cudgel thee with my staff.' Then Judas crawled to the King. 'What wouldst thou have me do?' asked James, when Stukeley told him what the Earl had done. 'Wouldst have me hang him? If I should hang all the men who speak ill of thee, all the trees in the country would not suffice.'

His son, 'young Judas,' and a French chemist, named Mansourie, had been closely bound up with

him, and these luckless men had now to share his ill repute. But justice fell upon them, swift and sure. On New Year's Eve, these rogues received the wages of their shame—the price of blood—in minted gold; and on the feast of Twelfth Night, Stukeley himself was taken in the act of clipping this new coin. When flung into the Gatehouse, he accused Mansourie and his son of sharing in his crime. Young Judas fled from justice; but the officers caught Mansourie in the west, and quickly thrust him behind the Marshalsea locks and bars. Their game being now played out, this chemist turned on Stukeley, and a long, strange tale he had to tell. Sir Judas was an old and seasoned rogue. A dozen years he had been employed in clipping and sweating coin. Mansourie was a partner in his trade. A Vice-Admiral of Devon had to receive and pay a good deal of money, and on all this money they had used their profitable art. From clipping coin, they had passed to perjury and treachery. But God had found them out. The charges they had sworn were false; the wages of their shame had proved their ruin; in his prison cell, the chemist felt that what had fallen upon him was a judgment for his sins!

When these confessions, signed with Man-

sourie's hand, were laid before the King, Sir Judas fell at once. Stript of his Vice-Admiral's flag, he was conducted from the Gatehouse to the Tower. To make the judgment yet more striking, he was lodged in Raleigh's cell.

Sir Judas knew so much about the court intrigues, that James would not allow him to be tried, even on so grave a charge as that of clipping coin. So base a creature would be sure to blab; and James, in mortal fear of fresh exposures, sent the wretch a pardon, bade him leave the Tower, and hide his face for ever from the sight of men. But where could Judas hide his face? Down west, among his kith and kin, he found no peace. All gentlemen scowled, all burghers hissed and cursed, when he approached. He fled from town to country, and from country back to town. A curse was on his head. No man would shelter him. At length, he turned from the society of men; took boat for the Isle of Lundy, then a lonely rock on which the passing pirate built his lair: and there, surrounded by the howling winds and whitening waves, he lived, went mad, and died.

A new Vice-Admiral was wanted. Nottingham, as a Howard, would have sought some friend

of Spain; but just as the flag fell vacant, James was making an arrangement with the Earl for putting his darling into higher place. Already he had bought for him Lord Worcester's post as Master of the Horse; and he was trying to procure for him the great Lord Admiral's post. The Earl was not unwilling to retire—on terms. If Buckingham could be made Lord Admiral, there was every chance that Eliot would be named Vice-Admiral in the western ports.

Nottingham was persuaded to resign his office for a certain sum; three thousand pounds paid down, a pension of a thousand pounds a-year for life. The King was happy. A comedian ruled his stables and his fleet; that youth, whose comely face and joyous spirit made the poor old dotard young again. The lad would fawn, a whelp, at James's feet, and kiss his shoes, and call himself his dog. 'Tom Badger,' laughed the King; for Tom was then his favourite Fool. 'No,' whined the mimic, 'only dog.' He would be nothing but his Majesty's dog; and then the King was merry, and drank more wine, and seemed to forget his weight of care.

Buckingham, now Lord Admiral, named Sir John Eliot his Vice-Admiral in the western ports —the first step on his journey to the Tower!

CHAPTER III.

THE COUNTESS OF SUFFOLK.

When Nottingham was pensioned into private life, the Favourite turned upon the elder branch of his great house; the whole of whom he felt, in self-defence, that he must drive from office, and expel from court. It was for him a fight; a fight for place and pay; and it was long a question whether one so young and light could struggle with success against such hosts of Admirals, Councillors, Secretaries of State, as hung upon these Howards; backed and supported, as they were, by lovely and unscrupulous intriguers, such as Lady Suffolk, Lady Salisbury, and Lady Knollys. The fight was on; a boy against a host. The Tower stood open to receive the vanquished. Which would be the first to pass?

These Howards of the elder branch were not so strong as they had been in the reign of Carr; but they were high in office, rich in friends.

Suffolk was Lord High Treasurer, Chancellor of Cambridge, Constable of the Tower. Lord Walden, his eldest son, was Captain of the King's Gentlemen Pensioners; Sir Thomas Howard, his second son, was Master of the Prince's Horse. A crowd of officers toiled for them by day and night. The Monsons, Lakes, and Cranfields, knew no will but theirs. Sir Thomas Monson, Master of the Armoury, had his official residence in the Tower. Sir William Monson, Admiral in the Narrow Seas, had long directed the English fleet. Like Suffolk, these two gentlemen were Catholics, in the pay of Spain. Sir Thomas Lake was senior Secretary of State; his brother, Dr. Arthur Lake, was Bishop of Bath and Wells. Sir Lionel Cranfield was a Master of Requests, Master of the Wardrobe, Master of the Wards. Dependent on these worthies hung a host of fencers, Jesuits, sorcerers, and spies. The men kept bravoes and assassins in their pay. The women toyed with magic, and deceived themselves with charms. Some rogue who 'ruled the stars' was a familiar in their councils, over which he exercised an influence only second—and not always second—to the sway of their domestic priest. All members of the Church of Rome regarded Suffolk as their chief, and he was

strong with all the strength to be derived from Spain.

In his assault on this great family, Villiers could rely on the support of every man who loved the Dutch, and wished to see the Protestant states in Germany thrive and grow. The truce of Spain and the United Provinces was near the end. A Catholic League was being formed, the object, open and avowed, of which was to attack Bohemia and the Upper Rhine. The Spaniards, hoping that the hour had come for them to crush the Dutch, were building fleets and arming troops; and now, if ever, was the time for Philip's pensioners in London to deserve their pay An Admiral of the Downs, a Secretary of State, unfavourable to Spain, might do that country the gravest harm. But just as Philip wished to have an English Admiral in the Downs, an English Secretary at White Hall, who would receive his orders—Admirals like Sir William Monson, Secretaries like Sir Thomas Lake—the men who loved their country—such as Abbott, Bacon, Falkland, Eliot, Cavendish—prayed that these base servants of the enemy might be overthrown.

A brush was tried by Villiers with the Monsons, whom he swiftly drove from their important posts.

Devoted to Lady Suffolk, they had long been partners in her gains and crimes. Sir Thomas had been used by her in the Powder Poisoning, while Sir William had been useful in the pensioning from Spain. Sir Thomas had put Weston into Overbury's cell, and many of the poisoned meats were fetched by Weston from his house. Sir William was the first English sailor to accept a Spanish bribe. An Admiral of the Downs was worth his price; and Monson was one of seven great persons who, besides abundant gifts, received for fifteen years an annual pension from the Spanish crown.

Overbury's murder lent a pretext for removing these two officers; but the actual cause of their arrest was their connexion with the Spanish court. Lodged in the Tower, and subject to a secret quest—too delicate for a court of law—they had been hastily degraded and removed from their important posts. Sir William Cope became Master of the Armoury; but Lady Suffolk had still the power to send her kinsman, Captain Howard, to Monson's flag-ship in the Narrow Seas.

Lady Suffolk sneered at Villiers, as a stripling who might keep his place until the King got tired of his foolish face, and then would have to

troop, as Herbert, Hay, and Carr, had trooped before. The only thing that never failed, she thought, was craft; the patience that can plant and wait. Aware, beyond all women of the court, in what the royal weakness lay, she looked about for handsome lads; but having heretofore been troubled by their scruples, she was bent on trying her fortunes this time with a Catholic face. Well used to the marts of vice, she caught with critical eye such points as pearly teeth, soft hair, and dimpled cheeks, and she was no less quick to see how far such lures might be enhanced by necromantic spells. From girlhood she had been familiar with the Formans, Dees, and Lambs, who looked upon her ladyship as their chief support. The Rokewoods were a comely race; and one of the Rokewoods was presented to the King. He failed. A prettier boy than Rokewood, and as sound a Catholic, was William Monson, son of her Admiral of the Downs, who had now been liberated from the Tower. If Monson could supplant the Favourite, there was nothing she could ask and be denied, from manors, gifts and pardons, to the ducal coronet of her husband's house.

This patroness of poisoners and magicians fell

to work in her usual way. Sending for young Monson to her house at Charing Cross, she gave him hints about his dress, his manner, and his speech. She washed his face with milk; she curled his hair with tongs; she scented his breath with spices; and she put him in a place where James must see him as he passed. The stake for which young Monson played was high, and he had friends to help him in the Lord High Treasurer, in the Master of the Wards, and in the Secretary of State. But James was not yet tired; the ambush failed; and Monson found, too late, that he was stumbling headlong into fire. Villiers spoke to James. Much wiser men than Villiers were alarmed by Lady Suffolk's schemes; for Monson in the closet meant a pensioned council, and a policy directed from Madrid. It meant an English court at war with the English people, as to Germany and the Catholic League. No one felt sure of James. The King had no broad views of policy. He wanted peace; he wished his children to do well; he hoped the German princes would be able to hold their own; but he was dreaming of a Spanish bride for the Prince of Wales; he was in daily intercourse with Gondomar, the

Spanish agent; if the match went on, he was more and more likely to lend his ear to those who could make themselves strong in Spain. If a rupture of the crown and country was to be avoided, it was time for men of weight to speak; and James soon heard from men on every side, that if young Monson were received at court, all England would be ready to believe the Jesuits were in power, and no man could be answerable for the public peace. James heard this warning, got alarmed, and sent his Chamberlain to tell young Monson that his Majesty was not pleased with him; that he was much too forward in his ways; that he was not a man who should approach the King, his father having just come out of jail. The Chamberlain added, that his education had been bad, and he was daily seen with persons and in places not to be allowed. 'You must not put yourself,' said Pembroke, 'in his Majesty's way; indeed, his Majesty advises you not to come near his court at all.'

Then Lady Suffolk changed her course. In bringing out her youth as a Catholic, she had shown her cards too soon. But she could try again. The Puritans were strong; the men who

were neither Papist nor Puritan were stronger still; and these more moderate men had worked against her and defeated her. She ordered Monson to appear at church. She got him to express some doubts — to seek new lights — to listen to the Anglican divines. In no long time he was 'converted;' and she played her game so well that Abbott, the Lord Primate, was induced to receive this convert to his Church. At Easter, Monson took the sacraments and appeared at court; but all in vain; for James still took no notice of the lad. Lady Suffolk tried new lines. She bade him pout and fret, and ask for leave to travel, like a youth in love. When James was told that Monson wished to go abroad, he asked, 'For what?' 'Because,' the querist said, 'he cannot live in peace when banished, from his master's face.' 'If he is driven from my presence,' said the King, ''tis more than I know.' The leave to travel was refused; some said because the King was taking to the love-sick youth. Long heads began to ask once more how many days would dawn ere Monson would commence his upward flight?

The Favourite kept his eyes on Lady Suffolk,

for the war had gone so far that either he or she must fall. The fight was now become a fight for life; and one of the two must pass beneath the arch of Traitor's Gate. Which of the two would pass beneath that fatal arch?

CHAPTER IV.

TO THE TOWER!

Not able yet to move on Lady Suffolk and her kindred, Villiers bared his arm against their chief support, Sir Thomas Lake, the senior Secretary of State.

A thin man, weak in body, weaker still in mind, who had commenced his life as servant to a clerk in Burghley's office, Lake had crept and wriggled into place and pay, by exercising talents which an honest man could not possess. This menial had a nose for filth. A parasite and a spy, he crept into great houses, where he pried in nooks and vaults until he found in what corner the family skeleton lay hid. He knew all scandals of private life; he kept a record of all acts of shame. If any page lost money that he could not pay, Lake knew it. If any lord ran after other men's wives, Lake knew it. Cecil could not hide from Lake his frailties, and the crafty

listener at key-holes could have named the sum of Lady Suffolk's bribe. The King delighted in such dirt, and Lake was always at his heels.

But Lake was made for higher things than Archie Armstrong and Tom Badger, the accepted Fools. He could indite a brief, as well as feed a dog; and when the King was minded to become a Secretary of State, he put this clerk, as one of whom no gentleman could be jealous, at his desk. But step by step, Lake stole into importance; keeping his name in the shade; affecting to be nobody; and confining his requests on his master's bounty to such gifts as the reversion of a clerkship, the concession of a fine. In part a porter, and in part a pimp, Lake held in James's palace the anomalous post which a barber and story-teller holds in Eastern tales. Cecil had kicked him out of doors; he crept in softly by the private stair. When Suffolk was in power, he fawned on Suffolk; when Gondomar came over, he joined the friends of Spain. In time he got his spurs, and went to the city, where he found a wife in Mary Ryder, one of those city madams who conceived that when they bought a man with money they might treat him like a slave. This city minx was hot for

rank, and while poor Lake was whining for a place—the Secretary's place—his wife took out her purse, inquired the price, and told down fifteen thousand pounds.

Lake had been Secretary of State some years, and earning by his treacheries the pension he received from Spain; but Lady Lake was burning for a coronet; and when the King gave Lake a barony for sale, his wife insisted on retaining it for themselves. James made but one condition; if they kept it, Lake must yield the Secretary's place. With this removal of Lake to the House of Lords, the Favourite would have been content; but Lake was loth to quit a post which kept him near the King, and gave him secrets he could sell in Spain. He could not see his way; he wished to be a lord; he also wished to keep his place. The King got vexed with him; and while the dubious husband and the domineering wife were fighting for their dignities, a sudden tempest swept them both into the Tower.

Ann Lake, their child, a girl as light of life as she was fair of face, was married to William Cecil, Lord Roos, the heir of Thomas, Earl of Exeter. Roos was one of those young fools of quality whom Gondomar employed in tampering

with the English Church; but he had nothing in either mind or body to invest him with a dangerous power. A youth, he had spent his fortune on drabs and trolls; a man, he had sought to pay his debts by marrying a low-born wife. This wife, though younger than himself in years, was older in her knowledge of the world. A pupil of Lady Somerset, she was more than familiar with such charlatans as Simon Forman and Dr. Lamb. When Roos had pawned her jewels, and left her father to discharge his debts, she asked him for a transfer of his lands; and when he sneered at her for asking such a foolish thing, she took up pen, wrote out a bond, and bade him sign it on the spot. He would not—then beware! What would she do? She—Lady Roos, his wife—would tell such tales as would compel him to retire from court. She would proclaim to all the world that he was *not a man!*

Poor Roos, alarmed by threats, gave her eight hundred pounds to stop her tongue. But Lady Roos had learned to feel her power. Her father held a mortgage on some lands of his; she bade him settle these lands upon her, for her separate use. For such a deed Lord Exeter's signature

was wanted; and the old man raised objections to the scheme, which drew the anger of these demons on himself.

Lady Roos began a game of slander, perjury, and violence. Gondomar got the young lord sent on a foolish errand into Spain; and in his absence Lady Roos declared, that, like her old friend Lady Somerset, she would sue her husband for divorce; and, like that friend, assert that from the first her marriage had been null and void. But James now interposed. He could not live through such a scandal twice. He would not have his days disturbed; if Roos and Lady Roos could not endure each other they must find some better way to part. Then Lady Roos set on her brother Arthur (as her friend had set on Harry Howard) to attack her husband in the streets. When Roos came home, she wrote a letter, telling him that she was kept from him by force; that her mother was to blame; and that she wished him to come and fetch her home. Lord Roos, who loved her in his silly fashion, jumped into his coach, and drove to her door. Here, Arthur and a band of servants lay in wait, and when he stepped from his coach to go into the house, they set on him with clubs.

Two of his men were felled to the ground, and Roos was lucky to escape with life. It was as much as Lake could do to hush this matter up, and hide the attempt at murder by his son beneath the cloak of a sudden brawl.

Violence having failed, and James being firm against divorce on ground of nullity, nothing remained for Lake and his daughter but to get Lord Roos to live abroad. The Spanish agent—ever a ready tool of the Howard party—was employed. He tempted the young idiot, not to run away from London merely, but to leave the Court without a license, so as highly to incense the King. With Gondomar's letters in his trunk, Roos left the country, passed through France to Rome, endured conversion from his Church, and then rode on to Naples, where he died. Men said he fell by poison; but who cared how he—a runaway and an apostate—fell?

Yet Lady Roos was not much nearer to her end; possession of her husband's large estates. Lord Exeter opposed her wishes; acting, as the Lakes pretended, on the prompting of a lady, whom he married late in life. They turned upon his Countess. Lake and his wife accused her of intent to murder. Lady Roos accused her of a

criminal passion for her husband's grandson. Sara Swinton and Luke Hutton were their witnesses; they even swore that they had forced the Countess of Exeter to confess her crimes, and sign a paper which was evidence of her guilt.

Lady Exeter appealed to the law in vindication of her fame; but Lady Lake was no bad scholar in the school of Lady Suffolk. Sending for some leaders of the bar to her house, she told them bluntly that if any of their body should presume to take up Lady Exeter's brief, he should be ruined with the King for ever!

Exeter and Chandos (the injured lady's husband and her brother) went, with the willing help of Villiers, to the King, and, dropping on their knees before him, begged that his Majesty would command inquiry into all the facts alleged, and satisfy himself that none of them were true. The King was sore with Lake; for he had just received from him a paper asking for a recusant fine, by the hands of Archie, the royal Fool. 'Yes; justice should be done,' said James; and under Buckingham's favour, and in spite of Gondomar's resistance, it was quickly done. The Countess proved her innocence; the Lakes were overwhelmed with shame. King James pro-

nounced a sentence which destroyed the toil of years. Sir Thomas Lake was fined four thousand pounds, and sentenced to imprisonment in the Tower for life. Lady Lake was to pay a similar fine and suffer like imprisonment in the Tower. Lady Roos was fined ten thousand marks, with imprisonment in the Tower for life. Sir Arthur Lake was fined a thousand pounds, with imprisonment in the Tower for life. Sara, the lying maid, was sentenced to be whipt.

The Monsons and the Lakes being pushed aside, the war could now be carried to a higher ground, and Lord and Lady Suffolk were attacked.

An officer in the Court of Wards, being taken in the fact of robbery, boldly answered his accuser, that the Lord Treasurer and his Countess (Lord and Lady Suffolk) lived in the habit of daily fraud. Suffolk was called to answer for himself, and his replies were thought so lame, that his staff of office was taken from him, and a strict inquiry ordered into his accounts. But Lady Suffolk, now an adept in the use of pistol, knife, and poisoned cup, was prompt. That officer of the Court of Wards was murdered. Years ago this remedy might have saved her; but the times were changing; and she only fell into

deeper trouble through the rumours which at once arose. All tongues accused her of his death. The Earl, less blind and angry than his wife, proposed to face the facts, admit the Favourite's power, and buy his friendship by a costly bribe. Aware that James was going to set his minion up, he sent to offer Buckingham his choice of either Audley End or Suffolk House.

Villiers either could not, or he would not, stop the inquiry now afoot. What came to light bore out the murdered man's report, and justice laid her heavy hand on Suffolk and his hateful wife. They were indicted for corruption and embezzlement; the charge was proved beyond all cavil; and Villiers had the sweet revenge of fining his powerful enemies thirty thousand pounds, and sending them under escort to the Tower.

But when the gates were closed on them, his wrath was spent. His foes were ruined; they could hurt no more; his gladsome nature shrank from the sight of pain. In Villiers' time the Tower was not itself; a place of racks, of poisons, and of death; but only a sort of 'corner' into which a gay and frolicsome creature, playing at government, put his more naughty boys.

A day of fret, a month of pain, and he would let them go. The Monsons got away. Sir Thomas Lake was gone; and Lady Roos was gone. In ten days, Suffolk and his lady made their peace. They were to live in the country, and their sons, Lord Walden and Sir Thomas Howard, were to yield their places and retire from court. Walden gave up his post as Captain of the Gentlemen Pensioners; Sir Thomas Howard, that of Master of the Horse to Charles.

Of his long list of victims, Lady Lake alone remained a prisoner. She was prouder than her husband and her child. She would not bend to Villiers; she would not confess her guilt; and she was left to her defiance in the Tower.

CHAPTER V.

LADY CATHARINE MANNERS.

HAVING made his Favourite great, the King was minded to make him rich; but rich at cost of somebody else's purse; most cheaply to be done —on the Parent's plan—by marrying him to a big estate.

When first he came to court, the lad was keen on girls with money of their own. One such he found in Ann, a daughter of Sir Roger Aston, one of the King's old Scottish carls. Ann had a pension of two hundred pounds a-year; and this small sum had seemed a fortune to the younger son of a penniless knight. When George made love to Ann, the fair Scotch lassie gave him love for love. Their friends were told, and all their kin was talking, of the match, when some one whispered in the Parent's ear, that George was throwing himself away on such a girl. The Parent told

her son to look still higher; and Ann was left to weep for his handsome face.

Of all the heiresses at James's court, the first in birth and prospect was the Lady Catharine Manners, only child of Francis, Earl of Rutland; heiress, in her right, of the ancient barony of Ros, and born to a vast estate in money and in land. Young, lovely, graceful, she was just the wife for George. The girl, it seemed, was not averse; for every woman in the Park was more or less in love with his lustrous eyes, his dashing spirit, and his splendid dress; but Lady Catharine's father would not hear of such a match. What! marry his only child—he, Francis Manners, twenty-third Baron Ros, sixth Earl of Rutland—to the younger son of a country squire and a lady's maid!

In such a matter, James could be very stiff; but Rutland was a man not easily won by smiles, or cowed by frowns. He seldom came to court; and what he heard of it in his retreat at Belvoir Castle led him to thank the stars which drove him from so foul a place. For Rutland was a kind of 'banished duke,' who lived in leafy midland woods, remote from cock-pits and bowling alleys; the representative of a fallen fashion and a

persecuted faith. In early youth, he had lived abroad, and chiefly in the Catholic courts. A younger son, with hardly a second hope, he had escaped the perils of the Essex Plot; yet he had shared his brother Roger's views; and since the King came in, he had clung to the party looking back towards Rome. But he was cold and cautious, even in religious zeal; and after Cecil had betrayed and Carr dispersed the Essex circles, he removed into the country and remained aloof. A widower, with an only child, he loved retirement for his daughter's sake. But Belvoir Castle is not a place in which a man can hide; and spies reported that Lord Rutland was occasionally spending his princely wealth in Popish plots.

One object of the King in marrying Buckingham to Lady Catharine, was to lessen Rutland's wealth; he therefore fixed the price of Buckingham's hand at twenty thousand pounds down, eight thousand pounds a-year in land!

Aware that his child was hunted for his house and land, the recluse took to himself a second wife. A son would spoil the game, and soon this second wife presented him with a son. The courtship cooled. Lord Rutland hoped the

King would turn elsewhere; but while he was hoping so, his infant died. The courtship was resumed. His young wife gave him a second son. Again the courtship cooled. If Catharine was a noble, lovely girl, she was not now a peerless bride for George.

But things had gone too far between the lovers for the match to be easily cast aside; yet James made such demands for settlements as gave the Earl some hope of killing the match on this lower ground, without being driven to insult his Majesty by reference to his Favourite's birth. The family —that is to say, the Parent—was content to sell his handsome face for ten thousand pounds down and four thousand pounds a-year in land. Rutland refused these terms as being too hard upon his infant son. While they were haggling over pence, that second infant died; and now the broken peer, too well aware that those who were stealing from him his only child, and all that would accrue to her, could lodge him, if he vexed them, in the Tower, gave way—at least, on grounds of money and of birth. He stood out only on the question of his daughter's creed. She had been bred a Catholic; and a Catholic she must live and die.

But here the King stepped in. He meant his Favourite to be all in all; and public feeling would not suffer the first man in his realm to have a Papist wife. Before the King could yield his blessing on the match, the lady must forsake her priest, and go to her parish church. If left alone, she might have done so, as her father feared; for she was meek in spirit and deep in love; but Rutland was resolved that she should not be left alone. To make things safe he brought her down to his country-house; supposing that in Belvoir Castle, in the midst of her domestic priests, she must be free from harm. How could the strict old Catholic peer suspect that in carrying her home he was lodging her close to the serpent's lair?

Not far from Belvoir Castle lay the village of Walgrave, in the rectory of which village dwelt John Williams, chaplain to his Majesty the King; a young Welch parson, young at thirty-seven; whose fair, fat face and glozing tongue had won him favour in the eyes of Sir Thomas Compton's wife. John Williams was a eunuch from his birth, and (like all eunuchs, if our Arab stories lie not) he was lax in thought and free of speech. Lord Rutland knew his neighbour as a fluent wit and boon companion; one of those pleasant men so

welcome in a country-house, whose talk inflames the table and imparts fresh bouquet to the wine. He knew this parson as a rising man, with many and increasing dignities in hand; a royal chaplaincy; the rectories of Grafton, Walgrave, Underwood; a prebend's stall in Lincoln; choral places in Peterborough, in Hereford, and in St. David's. What John Williams was, besides good fellow and fat pluralist, the Earl could only learn from time; for Williams was a schemer who would hardly let his right hand guess the purpose of his left.

This parson had been Ellesmere's chaplain; he had learned the secrets of York House; he had made a collection of 'tools to work with;' and had come to think the Seals, so long a property of cardinals and bishops, might be won once more to holy Church. When Bacon got the Seals he offered to keep Williams on; but Williams, having talked to the King, and tickled him with merry tales and racy jokes, declined this offer; hoping that much higher duties were in store for him than blessing a Lord Chancellor's meat and wine. The King had told him he must gain a place in Buckingham's heart; and with his knowledge of men and women, he had sought the

Parent as the surest way of getting at the son. She wanted 'tools to work with' also, and the fair Welch parson was the minister for her. He courted her with wit; he flattered her with love. The fading creature smiled on his fair young face and brawny back, not knowing what defects they hid. If rumours in her house were true, she took his fortunes on herself, in view of closer ties, when heaven should take Sir Thomas to itself.

This supple and adroit divine was just the man to work on Lady Catharine's mind. He rode from Rectory to Castle, not as a commissioner for the match, but as a neighbour, who could come and go without suspicion of a plot. He was to worm himself into the family councils; note how peer and daughter looked upon the marriage; put the King's desire before them in the fairest light; and work, as he should find an opening, on the daughter's love and on the father's fear. It was a shameful office; but this royal chaplain had no sense of shame. If he should win, his fortunes would be made; for he would gain, by one bold stroke, the King, the Favourite, and that Favourite's wife.

In no long time the chaplain scored his game.

The girl he found was deep in love; a fact which put him on the shortest track. He spoke to Rutland, who allowed him to perceive he knew the worst, and was prepared for it. The match then might go on? The King, Lord Rutland sighed, would have it so; nay, Catharine herself would have it so. They spoke of dowry, and the chaplain talked the Earl into giving the love-lorn girl a promise of ten thousand pounds in money and four thousand pounds a-year in land on her wedding-day. But higher work was needed from him yet; work that, if duly done, might raise him from his country canonry and parish to a loftier seat. Poor Lady Catharine must be cozened into going to church. The King had tried his skill with her and failed. Sending for her to the palace, he had opened on her his theological batteries; but the lady, stunned by articles and canons, left him, saying she could never change. She was a Catholic because her father was a Catholic. No argument of Jewell and of Hooker was of use when urged against a father's wish. But Williams now appeared, and this divine pursued a different course to James. Riding over to Belvoir Castle, where he found the girl alone, he talked about her love; and

taking from his pocket a copy of the Marriage Service, read it to her sweetly, pointing out the beauty of its phrase, and asking her whether she did not think that this was the better way? The sighing maiden said she thought it was. But Rutland would not hear of such a change; and when the news that Lady Catharine would consent was bruited through the court, he put his daughter under stricter watch. She left her home. 'Where is the Lady Catharine?' stormed the Earl. 'She left with Lady Buckingham,' said his servants; 'and she has not since been seen.' A day, a night, passed by, and yet she did not come. They ran to Lady Buckingham's house. Yes, Lady Catharine was there; but she was ailing slightly, and was gone to bed. Lady Buckingham went so far in falsehood as to tell the world that Rutland himself had placed his daughter in her hands. But Rutland raged about the town, declaring that the Villiers gang had stolen his child; that they had blasted her reputation; that they were seeking to destroy her soul. On Buckingham's head he poured out all his wrath; calling him seducer, villain, miscreant; never dreaming that the author of his misery was that smiling rector who was

sitting at his board. When Rutland met with Buckingham, he fell upon him, and, but for the presence of Prince Charles, the old man and the young one would have come to blows. Rutland refused to take his daughter back; he swore that she had run away, that she had been seduced; and that the only way to purge her fame was for my lord of Buckingham to marry her without a moment's pause.

Buckingham now got cool. The lady, he declared, was pure from him, and cried out pertly, that the only stain she had to fear was that proceeding from her father's tongue. He could not take a wife in such a way; and if the Earl was not more civil, he would drop the match, and throw her back upon his hands. One day, he asked the King's permission to cry off; pretending that the Earl was mad, and that Lady Catharine's issue would be likewise mad! But James now held him to his vows. No second bride with such a fortune could be found in London; and the rector of Walgrave, who was with her daily, found that he was making progress with her soul. On Lady Catharine offering to receive communion in the English form, the King insisted that his pet should keep his pledge; though such had

been the scandal of her elopement and of his behaviour after it, that such a public wedding as that of Carr and Frances Howard could not with decency be held.

In a closed room of the royal palace, with but two witnesses of the rite, John Williams finished his work by marrying George, Marquis of Buckingham, to Lady Catharine Manners; George pretending to believe his bride was won to the English Church, and Catharine willing to perform a convert's part. King James and Rutland were those two witnesses who saw the wedding and signed the book. The King said nothing better could be done; the date was kept a secret; and the Earl resented the affair as one of personal disgrace.

John Williams was rewarded with the Deanery of Salisbury; which he soon exchanged for that of Westminster, on his way to other things—a Bishop's See, a seat upon the Woolsack, and a lodging in the Tower.

CHAPTER VI.

HOUSE OF VILLIERS.

THE House of Howard driven from court, a House of Villiers was to take its place. One evening, at a feast, the King called out for wine, and drank a toast to the House of Villiers; saying that he should make their fortunes his peculiar care; that where he gave his heart he should give his hand; that he would raise that family above all others in his realm. On every side he held this promise; so that Howards, Greys, and Nevills, might have time to learn, that whether they wagged their tongues or not, the kinsmen of his George should soar beyond their flight. The first in love should be the first in rank. All men who honoured George should find him a gracious master; all who vexed and thwarted George would find him an indignant prince. The family of George should be his own. He meant to make them barons, countesses, and earls, and find for each of

them, according to the sex, a wealthy husband or a wealthy wife.

The Parent was created Countess, and Sir Thomas might have been an Earl, but that his handsome and faithless wife had left his house. Having given him a pair of horns, she wished him to remain Sir Thomas Cuckold all his life. Lord Compton, her husband's brother, whom she liked because he was rich, and helped her son with money, was created, through her influence, Earl of Northampton (one of the Howard titles), and appointed President of Wales.

Susan, her daughter, was provided with a husband, in Sir William Feilding, of Newnham Padox, in the county of Warwick; a country squire, who owed his knighthood to King James. But Feilding was a squire of very great wealth and very high birth; a scion of the imperial Hapsburg line, whose ancestors had come to England in the reign of Henry the Third. Gifts and grants were showered upon this pair. Sir William got the Wardrobe and its many fees; together with a special license, granting him all savings in his office! Groom and bride were then created Viscount and Viscountess Feilding; and when their eldest son was born, the

King stood sponsor to the child. In no long time, Sir William and his wife were raised to the rank of Earl and Countess of Denbigh (one of Leicester's titles); honours in the peerage which their children, cousins of the House of Austria, still enjoy.

The search after wives for John and Kit were comedies of their kind, not often to be mated at the Curtain and the Globe.

The Parent began with John, who was already dubbed a knight. A stupid fellow, mean in figure, weak in mind, Sir John was still her eldest son. She sent for Doctor Lamb, who mixed a potion for the lout, and made him drink it with mysterious rites. She begged for him a place at court, as Gentleman in the Prince's Bedchamber; in the hope that it would help him to marry money, even if he should not grow to Charles what his handsome brother had grown to James. She got him the reversion of George's barony of Whaddon, with the Grey estates; but this reversion was not likely to fall in, and witless John had still to be provided with his daily bread.

Looking round the court for a fitting wife for her stupid son, a girl with blood, with money,

and a comely face, she fixed her eyes on Frances Coke, a girl of dazzling beauty, and of yet more dazzling wealth. She told Sir John to court this prize: the timid fool, unapt to take a lady's eye, implored his mother to court her for him; and she undertook—if he would play the man—to see him through the match.

Sir Edward Coke, the father of this dazzling prize, was out of office, out of grace, and longing with a morbid passion to get back. The Villiers folk had driven him out, and only the Villiers folk could bring him in. An agent whispered that a gate was opening for him, if he had the sense to see it, and the nerve to mount the step. He had a chance of getting into the Villiers circle through his child, whose lovely face had charmed Sir John. Much money must be paid, no doubt; but what is money worth except what it will buy? Frances had means and John had power. A match between them would give the old Chief-Justice all that he had lost, and more than he had lost. His daughter might become a peeress; he himself a councillor and peer.

Now, Coke disliked the Villiers folk, and prized his money even more than rank and place; but after turning matters over in his mind, he

gave his pledge that Frances should be married to Sir John; the more earnestly as he saw no other means of gaining power at court, and as the portion he would have to give with Frances was the money of his wife.

The first proposal was that Frances should bring her husband ten thousand pounds in gold and a thousand pounds a-year in land. Coke raised objections to these terms as being much too high. The Parent raised her price—she must have twenty thousand pounds instead of ten. She offered Coke a place at the Council-board, a barony, and the Seals. The Seals alone were cheap at such a price. Sir John Bennett was offering thirty thousand pounds. But, happily, while Coke was weighing his greed of gold against his greed of place, the King, who knew but little of these bargains in his closet, put the Seals into Sir Francis Bacon's hands. Coke lost his tide, and in his future parley with the Parent had to treat for a peerage only, with a chance of higher things on Bacon's fall.

But Frances had a Parent also; one who had more magicians in her service than the Parent who was courting for Sir John. Coke's wife, Lady Hatton, was the owner of Hatton House in

London, of Corffe Castle in Dorsetshire, and of those lengths of iron-sand, and marble quarries, which make the wealth of Purbeck Isle. Much of her land, if not the whole, would go to the man who should be lucky enough to win her only child. Lady Catharine Manners was hardly a greater match than Frances Coke.

This sale of Frances to an idiot, who was only to be kept awake by magic arts, was neither to the daughter's nor the mother's taste. Frances had a lover of her own in Henry de Vere, the young Earl of Oxford, who was then abroad. How far they had gone in courtship was not known; but Lady Hatton went about declaring they had entered into such a contract as bound them to each other by the Canon law. The King was troubled in his mind, for though he wished to please his darling and that darling's kin, he dared not face such scenes as sprang from quarrels about the marriage-rite. The cases of Lady Rich and Lady Essex had left him timid, if they had not found him so; and now he thought, that if this match were pressed in spite of Lady Hatton's pleas, he would himself keep out of it. If the law was broken to suit Sir John, he would leave his lawyers to do the deed.

Coke and his wife were made aware that they were left by James to fight it out; Coke aided by the Parent and her sons; Lady Hatton by the indolent indifference of her daughter to the match. Each had sense enough to see that one great point would be possession of the prize. Each played the spy upon the other; each made friends in the house; each got up factions in the dressing-room and in the servants'-hall. The household was on Lady Hatton's side; for every one who had to live with Coke disliked him, just as every one liked his prodigal and handsome wife. One night, when Coke was fast asleep, the mother and her child slipped out of doors, and drove to Oatlands, where they hid themselves in a kinsman's house. For some hours Coke was baffled in his search for the runaways; but on learning where they lay, he ran to the Council and demanded warrants of arrest against his wife and child.

Bacon would not grant them, and the King and Buckingham were absent in the North. He felt for Lady Hatton, who was of his kin; and as a magistrate he could not tolerate proceedings which must bring with them a breach of the public peace. Coke went to the Parent, and

inflamed her jealousy of the Lord Chancellor. His wife, he urged, was poisoning the young lady's mind against Sir John; was hiding her in order to defeat the match; was plotting, with the Chancellor's connivance, to convey her into France. Coke's story went to the Parent's heart. She ordered Bacon to comply; but Bacon steadily refused. She raved and stormed, and threatened him with the vengeance of her son. It was no idle threat, as Bacon found; for this base woman never ceased intrigues against him till she pulled him from his height.

Assured of her protection, Coke rode down to Oatlands, with a dozen men well armed, and, after calling on his wife to bring his daughter forth, smashed in the door. Bursting into her room, he seized the girl, and putting her into a coach, drove off with her to his house at Stoke.

When Buckingham heard of these events, he took a middle course, by making Lady Hatton's cause his own, and offering higher terms to her than any he had made with Coke. If Lady Hatton would consent to Frances marrying with Sir John, she might obtain a peerage for herself, apart from Coke; and even a second peerage

which she might either give or sell. He turned his back on Coke; and threatened to bring him to trial in the Star Chamber on various counts, the least of which would justify the Council in committing him to the Tower. He told Lady Hatton that the King, the Queen, and all the court would come to the wedding dinner; and her daughter should be created a viscountess on her wedding-day. The King himself spoke to her, dined with her, gave her five or six kisses, and the honours of knighthood for no less than four of her private friends. But all in vain. They had to wed the pair without her leave, and on the chance that she would afterwards relent. To please her and annoy her lord, the bridegroom was created Viscount Purbeck and Baron Stoke; a dignity which Coke had chosen for himself.

CHAPTER VII.

REVOLUTION.

HAVING found a wife, the Favourite sought a house on the Thames, and hoped to get it as a fairy gift. Suffolk's great pile at Charing Cross had been refused by him when offered as the price of pardon for the Earl. Two houses near the palace suited him; Wallingford House, the residence of William Knollys, Viscount Wallingford; York House, the residence of Francis Bacon, Viscount St. Albans; and he asked for both; the first as a house to live in while the second was being pulled down and built again on a larger scale. Not doubting that he had but to ask and have, like prodigals on the stage, he sent for Inigo Jones, explained his wants, and told that architect to build him such a pile as Italy alone could boast.

William, Viscount Wallingford, an upright, stern old man of seventy-two, was Master of

the Wards, and husband to Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the Earl and Countess of Suffolk. Lady Wallingford was her mother's child. Forty years younger than her husband, whom she married for money and affairs of state, she was as profligate and venal as the females of her race. In after years, the secret amours and public frauds of this abandoned creature came before the courts of justice, and the story of her life as Countess of Banbury is still the leading case in illustration of our adulterine and bastardine laws. She and her sister, Lady Salisbury, were at strife, and each told tales against the other's fame. The mimic, making merry with these tales, suggested to the King that such a post as Master of the Wards should not be held by a ridiculous fellow who was mocked by tavern witlings as a hen-pecked husband with a shrewish wife. No fault was found with Wallingford himself, and James was frank enough to tell him he must yield his post, lest worse befell him, not for anything he had done, but solely on account of his wicked wife.

At first, the Viscount held his own; he would not give his place; he would not sell his house. But Lady Wallingford had no mind to brave a

public trial, and to share the lodgings of her mother and her sister in the Tower. She made him yield, and in a few weeks Buckingham went to live at Wallingford House.

The Villiers family had tasted gold and longed for more. Among their fierce and noisy enemies in office, was Sir Henry Yelverton, Attorney-general, Bacon's friend and fellow-lodger at Gray's Inn. This upright man, as pure in in life as he was brave in speech, was not disposed to buy his way with gifts. The Parent could not bear him, and the King, though he admired his parts and liked his honesty, was vexed by what he called his 'lewd, licentious tongue.' Such words as 'I will weigh the King's reasons as I weigh his coins,' were not to James's taste, and Yelverton had a trick of using words thus bold. The time had come to rob him, and the Favourite was induced to put him in a corner, till he could be squeezed and spoiled. James Ley, Attorney in the Court of Wards, had offered ten thousand pounds for Yelverton's place! A pretext for his ruin was not far to seek.

In drawing up a charter for the citizens of London, Yelverton, a popular man, had put

in certain words, to guard their ancient franchise from abuse. These words were said to widen the city freedom at the King's expense. No one pretended that the Attorney-general had done this act corruptly; but in such a suit this absence of corruption was the worst offence of all. The King felt piqued; his privilege was lessened; and his officer was told he must confess his fault. Yelverton could not help himself; he sent in his submission; but these persecutors wanted his place and not his penitence; and, therefore, on the ground that his confession was neither prompt nor full, they tried him in the Star Chamber; fined him four thousand pounds, deprived him of his post, and sent him, during pleasure, to the Tower.

A greater victim was to follow, in that Lord Chancellor whose house the Favourite wanted to pull down.

York House was dear to Bacon on many grounds. It was to him not only the residence of his place and rank, the sign of his authority, but the house in which he was born, in which his parents lived, in which his early years were spent, in which his father died, in which his mother waited for his coming out of France. In

later years, he had returned to it as a welcome guest. It was the scene of his first political labours; of his waiting on Ellesmere with the coronet; of his inauguration dinner as Lord Keeper. In its chambers he had written his noblest books; from them he sent forth his Great Reform. If he could part from such a place, his heart would give it up to Villiers sooner than to any other; but he would not yield that house to any living man.

Villiers could not see how any one should refuse him what he asked; and least of all a man for whom he professed to feel unbounded love. York House belonged to the crown, and Bacon only held a lease which, even if he would not sell it, must drop in with time. But then his plans were ready; plans with garden, water-gate, and terrace, such as Italy alone could boast. Must he wait on for years? James never made him wait:—then why should Bacon make him wait? His mind grew sore. The great man wished him well; yet would not give him his father's house! The great man was too high, and he must learn to bend. Quick tongues repeated this wild talk; for Buckingham, when vexed, was loose and loud; and every page at court

soon heard that huffs and scorns had passed between the Chancellor and the Favourite anent the transfer of York House.

Yet Villiers, if he had been left alone, would probably have done no more than pout and fret, and strive to gain York House from Bacon by some gentle means. The Parent whom he loved, to whom he had never yet said No, had wider views, and when her son withdrew his smiles from Bacon, she was ready for a spring upon the Seals. She knew how much those Seals were worth, for Bennett, Judge of the Prerogative Court, had bid for them no less a sum than thirty thousand pounds. This woman hated Bacon with all her soul and strength. She hated him for coming in. She hated him for getting place without a bribe. She hated him for thwarting the match with Frances Coke. But more than all, she hated him because he was always ailing and would not die.

In making an attack on Bacon, she could count on allies—in the Anglo-Spaniards, such as Suffolk and Arundel; in the Undertakers, such as Phelips, Digges, and Sandys; in personal enemies, such as Coke; in the office-hunters, such as Cranfield, Ley, and Williams; in those reformers of abuse who were prepared to 'strike at

Chancery,' even though they should have to strike through the Chancellor's heart.

The soul of this conspiracy was the Parent's clerical guide; that young Welsh parson, who, while serving Ellesmere, fixed his mind on tearing the Seals from a civilian's hands and placing them, where they had lain of yore, in custody of holy Church. Williams was born for office; and he sought his own with a directness not to be repelled. No scruple ever stayed his course. A man of the world by nature, a divine by chance, he found his cassock a convenient cloak. One doctrine in the Book he made his own; the doctrine of a Scape-goat; which he raised into his rule of policy and his rule of life. Most men are slow to answer for their sins, and Williams taught that princes, and the friends of princes, need not answer for their sins at all. A scape-goat should be always found. This canon, chaplain, prebendary, rector, dean in one, employed in his affairs such arts as tickled the comedian's nerves. One day, the Prince of Wales, in talking of some Spanish agents then in London, said he was amazed to find how much the chaplain knew. 'I will go with you and tell you,' said the chaplain, 'with what heifer I plough.

Your highness has often seen the secretary, Don Francisco Carondolet. He loves me, for he is a scholar; archdeacon of Cambrai; and sometimes we are pleasant together. I have discovered him to be a wanton, and a servant to our English beauties, and above all to one of that gentle craft in Mark Lane. A wit she is; and one that must be courted with news as well as with gifts. I have a friend that hath bribed her in my name, to send me a faithful conveyance of such tidings as her paramour, Carondolet, brings to her.' All these things Williams stooped to, with a cynic's laugh, when he could turn his practice to account. His price was high. The price of Lady Catharine's mock conversion was a deanery; that of the Lord St. Albans' ruin was to be the Seals.

No easy task was his; for strong as were the Villiers party, they were not above all law and custom of the realm. How could the Chancellor be reached? It was a dangerous thing to hint that justice was contaminated at the source. Not many months ago, John Wraynham, a Norfolk gentleman, had been tried in the Star Chamber on a charge of finding fault with one of his decisions; when four of the judges, Tanfield, Hobart, Montagu, and Coke, had sentenced him

to stand in the pillory, to lose his ears, to pay a thousand pounds fine, and lie in prison for the rest of life. The Chancellor begged a pardon from the crown for his assailant; but his Majesty was stiff about it; so that fourteen months elapsed ere Wraynham was again at large. Lord Clifton's case was still more recent and more striking. Vexed by one of his judgments, Clifton used some foolish threats. The King, without consulting Bacon, ordered him to the Tower, in which he was to lie a prisoner till his case was heard. Coke, Montagu, and Hobart would have brought him to a speedy trial; but the offended Chancellor begged that mercy might be shown so far as justice would allow. But while the case was pending, the unhappy suitor plunged two knives into his body, hacked his flesh, and died in his prison cell. No doubt existed, therefore, as to what protection was afforded to a Chancellor by law. Fine, pillory, mutilation, and the Tower, were ready for a man who wagged his tongue against the King's great minister of justice. How could he be reached?

In one way only, as it seemed. The crown might yield him to his enemies, as it yielded Yelverton and Suffolk to their enemies. If James

could be induced to drop him, he was ruined; for the moment he was in disgrace, the suitors would begin to rail, the clerks would join the winning side, the judges would decide in favour of the crown. But James was not yet ready to betray his great Lord Chancellor. Though he had no fine sense of Bacon's genius, he was quick enough to feel his wit, his learning, and his eloquence; and he was not inclined to let this minister be hunted down, as Yelverton and Suffolk had been hunted down. Was there no second way? No, none; according to the law.

One other way there was; a dark, a fearful, and a desperate way; one long disused, and happily forgotten, save by some old reader of the rolls like Coke. An officer of state might be impeached.

Impeached! Old readers knew that there had been a time—a short time—in our annals, when the ordinary rules of law were swept aside, and duke and earl condemned by their victorious foes, not seldom while their blood was hot, and while their mail was on. Lord Latimer was impeached in 1376, the Duke of Suffolk in 1449; these were the first and last examples of a revo-

lutionary time; but since the year of Cade, no minister of the crown had ever ventured to invoke this fatal right. In settled states all crimes are tried by law, and every one should find protection in the law; but this old method of procedure put the life and fortune of a man, however great, however guiltless, at the mercy of an angry and victorious crowd. What need is there to say, that such a right, if once invoked, upsets the reign of law? Yet, what no Seymour and no Dudley dared to face, these fribbles of a court in lace and ribbons ran at with a joyous laugh. 'By God!' cried James to Buckingham, 'you are a fool, Steenie; you are pickling a rod for your own breech!' The poor old King was right. This falling back upon the custom of impeachment was a falling back on civil war.

It was the Revolution.

A parliamentary impeachment needs a parliament; and (save the fruitless meeting of 1614) there had been no session for a dozen years. But Bacon was contending with an adverse court in favour of a Parliament; and the intriguers, who were working for his ruin, saw that they might gain their ends by helping him in the royal closet to obtain his wish.

CHAPTER VIII.

FALL OF LORD CHANCELLOR BACON.

BACON'S cure for all disorders in the state was free discussion, and those disorders in the state were now grown high. The Treasury was empty. 'Not a mark in the coffers,' sighed Mandeville. 'Then be of good cheer,' laughed Bacon, 'for you shall see the bottom of your business at the first.' But while the Chancellor put a face on things, he saw, on every side, much need for calling up the nation into council. James was at his final card. The ports had been taxed; the peers had paid their fines; the clergy had sent in their tenths; and even the courtiers had been squeezed. No one pretended that the realm was poor; the towns were growing larger, and the shires were growing richer, day by day; yet in the midst of all such signs of growth, the crown was sinking into poverty and weakness every year. Could nothing be attempted for the King's relief?

'A Parliament,' said Bacon, 'was the cure; a free parliament, in which the King and people should assist each other to conduct the government, improve the laws, and purify the faith.' He drew a scheme of policy, on which to reconcile the country and the crown; a scheme for mending much that was amiss at home, and strengthening our alliance and defence abroad. He asked the King to send out writs at once; to lend an ear to all complaints; to put down unjust patents and monopolies; and to add some squadrons to the royal fleet. The plotters were in ecstasies of joy; for Bacon's liberal policy might be turned against himself; and when their plans were settled, they rode down into the shires to seek for seats.

Coke found a seat at Liskeard, Cranfield at Andover, Ley at Canterbury. The three men formed an inner circle of the Villiers court. Coke and Cranfield were already bound up in the family by marriage; Ley was to be so in the summer months. Coke had fallen to the Parent, Cranfield to the Aunt. That terrible woman, with her fixed belief in marriage, kept about her a supply of penniless brides, and when she heard of any rich man, without a wife, who wished to get a place, a peerage, a command, she sent for him and told

him plainly how he might succeed. Sir Lionel Cranfield, once a clerk in the customs, then a broker in the city, afterwards a Master of Requests, a Master of the Wardrobe, and a Master of the Wards and Liveries, had enriched himself by a lucky marriage and a series of suspicious jobs. He had robbed the customs; he had bribed Northampton; he had shown the King how to squander public lands; he had betrayed his patrons; he had denounced the Lord Treasurer Suffolk; he had placed the White Staff in Villiers' hands for sale; and his reward for all these villanies was a string of offices, commissions, manors, grants, and fees. His first wife died. He then cast eyes on Lady Effingham, a widow, and the lady had received his vows before it struck the Parent that Sir Lionel was the man for one of her nieces—coarse, fat, penniless Ann Brett. She sent for Cranfield to her house, and bade him ponder what he had been, what he was. Her breath could make and mar him; he must come into her circle; he must jilt his love and wed her niece Ann Brett. Ann had no money; but in place of money she had friends. These friends could either raise him up or pull him down. Poor Cranfield writhed, and asked for

terms; a seat in the Privy Council, an important post, the coronet of an earl. All these the Aunt could promise him—in time—and then Sir Lionel took the penniless niece to wife.

Ley's case was Cranfield's case, with still worse features. Ley was an Attorney of the Court of Wards, but he had saved much money, and when Ellesmere died, he had introduced himself to the Villiers family by an offer of ten thousand pounds for the Seals. From that day they had kept their eyes on Ley. They gave him a baronetcy without a fee. They offered him the hand of Jane Butler, one of their nieces, with the prospect of promotion, and the coronet of an earl. He was seventy years of age; he had buried two wives; he had several sons grown up; but then his wealth was great; he could not live much longer; and his widow might be left a countess with a fine estate. As yet, the wedding was postponed; but every one at court considered that Ley and Jane were man and wife.

These officers of the crown could count, not only on official men—Sir Thomas Edmonds, Treasurer of the Household; Sir Robert Heath, Solicitor General; Sir John Bennett, Judge of the Prerogative Court; Sir Henry Carew, Comptroller

of the Household; and Sir George Calvert, Secretary of State—but on the votes of certain 'popular' members, who were known as Undertakers, from an offer they had made to 'undertake the King's business' in the House of Commons. As a party, these men held a middle course, and aimed at occupying a position which would give them equal influence with the country and the crown. They used all patriotic cries, while careful never to offend the King. They sought for friends on every side. They loved the breath of popular applause; they loved still more the place and pay which only kings could give; and they were glad to buy a chance of rising in the public service by their votes. Of these obliging members, Digges and Phelips were the chiefs.

Sir Dudley Digges and Sir Robert Phelips were both young men of courtly habits. Digges had followed Carr so long as Carr was high in favour, and was following Villiers now that Villiers was the morning-star. He was a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, and had recently been sent to Moscow on a public mission. Phelips had also tasted of the royal bounty. He was sent to Spain with Digby, when the Spanish match was first brought forward; he was then a 'friend

of Spain,' a correspondent of the Jesuits, and in danger of conversion to the Church of Rome. Father Greenwood wrote to him on religious subjects. Father Blackman guided his course of reading in the Spanish tongue. The great Chancellor had been kind to Phelips; particularly in the matter of a quarrel with Sir John Stowell; all the evidence in which he had instructed Thomas Meautys, his private Secretary, to suppress. But Phelips nursed a sore with Bacon, who had caused him loss in years gone by. Phelips had tried to get from James a grant of Sherborne House and Park; and he had come so near success that an official draft was laid before the crown lawyers. Bacon reported that the form was bad in law, and ere the draft could be amended, Sherborne Castle was conferred on Carr. Forgetting Bacon's recent kindness, he was ready to pursue him on this ancient grudge.

A young man, not yet known to fame, with sickly face and scowling brow, was seated on the county benches, with ability to serve the crown, beyond this tribe of officers and Undertakers, in Sir Thomas Wentworth, one of those men of glorious gifts who either raise or ruin kingdoms. But his terms were high, and Buckingham could

not stoop to buy his aid. For Wentworth wanted more than place — pre-eminence, and power. What he could give in payment was not known. His health was bad, his manner stiff, his accent harsh. But, worse than all, his theories of government were so tragic and unbending as to fill the soul of Villiers with dismay. Thus, Wentworth had to nurse his bile and bide his time.

The choice of Speaker lay with James; that is to say, with Villiers; and the man put forward by his party was Thomas Richardson, a rich and scurrilous lawyer, whom the Parent afterwards compelled to marry her sister Bess. The parts being duly cast, the comedy began.

The cry at the election booths had been against monopolies and patents, as the Chancellor foresaw; and after the elections, Bacon pressed the King to meet his people frankly, with a statement from the throne that these unpopular patents were annulled. But Buckingham would not listen to the sage; for many of his kin, including two of his brothers, Kit and Edward, were concerned, as partners, in the works conducted under those monopolies; and when Bacon pressed his policy on the Council, his advice was rejected by a majority of votes.

The House was hardly formed before this question of monopolies arose, and as the members wished to avoid all risk of conflict with the Crown, they charged the monopolists, not with holding patents which the Crown had every right to grant, but with a gross abuse of power. Two of these patentees were Michell and Mompesson, and the House was soon upon them. This was not what Ley and Cranfield wanted; for Sir Giles Mompesson was a kinsman of Villiers, while Kit and Edward were concerned as partners in his trade. But how were they to meet the case? If Michell and Mompesson were attacked, Sir Edward and Sir Kit would be in danger. They consulted Williams, and they found him ready, as he always was. 'Posthumius and Favonius overboard!' he cried. Sir Edward was abroad; Sir Kit must hide himself. One scapegoat might suffice. They could but try.

As Michell had no backers, Coke went down to the House, and moved, amidst a scene of great excitement, that the scapegoat be committed to the Tower. A pack of courtiers yelled approval. 'Let him make restitution,' called Calvert. 'Let him be unfrocked at the bar,' shouted Weston. 'Let him be fined,' cried Digges. 'Let him

be exempted from the general pardon,' added Wentworth. Michell begged to be heard in his defence, but Coke opposed such hearing, and the scapegoat was conducted through the streets on foot, attended by the halberds, to the Tower.

Mompesson sat in the House, of which he was a member, while the scapegoat was being hooted through the city. But the town was now on fire, and he was soon aware that he could only save himself by flight. A boat was hired for him, and ere the Commons could arrange the clauses of impeachment he was safe beyond the seas.

The House was now as passionate as the streets, and from abuse of patents, to abuse of lawyers who had certified those patents, was an easy step. 'Let us begin,' said Cranfield, 'with the administration of justice; then go on to trade, and last of all deal with the patents.' Cranfield was Master of the Court of Wards—a court in daily conflict with the Court of Chancery—but he was no lawyer, and was not aware that the House of Commons had no right to meddle with the courts. John Wraynham, now a member for Wotton Bassett, was a warning of the price at which they could arraign those courts; but Bacon, when he heard of their reluctance, bade them

speak their mind. They wished to probe abuses? They were helping him to do his work, and he was eager to assist them to achieve this end. Without his leave they could not have moved a single step.

Then Cranfield, Calvert, Coke, and Digges, brought on their case — a charge of laxity in receipt of fees, suggesting bribery and corruption on the bench. Egerton and Aubrey, suitors in his court, declared that they had paid in certain fees as bribes. This charge was monstrous, inconceivable; and all the best reformers in the House rejected it at once — rejected it for ever. Finch, Moyle, Sackville, Cavendish, Meautys, May, opposed themselves to this party motion; Wentworth, Pym, Crewe, Lyttleton, St. John, Hampden, stood aloof; amazed, no doubt, to find that Councillors and Secretaries should endow the House of Commons with such powers. Impeach a minister of State! No blood was asked as yet; but who could tell how soon the appetite for blood might come? When Bacon heard what course affairs were taking, he was staggered. Was the reign of law gone by? Were life and fame become the sport of passing majorities in Parliament? With sad

foreboding, Bacon said to James: 'Sir, they who strike at your Chancellor, will strike at your crown.' The House were slow to seize this revolutionary power. They had to be assured by reference to the Rolls, that former Parliaments had used this right of superseding courts of law. When Calvert, with the full authority of his place as Secretary of State, proposed that Aubrey's charge and Egerton's charge should be delivered to the Lords as facts which had been proved, he was virtually defeated; for the House would only send these charges up 'in a relation,' but without the prejudice of an opinion of their own.

The Villiers party, now supported by the Howards, were in greater strength in the House of Lords. But still they sought to increase their weight; and when the Chancellor fell sick, they raised James Ley to the bench as Lord Chief Justice, and appointed him by commission to preside in the House of Peers. When Bacon saw that they were sure of a majority of votes, he stood aside, and let the storm sweep by. 'I am the first,' he murmured; 'may I be the last.'

Lord Suffolk moved that Lord St. Albans should be made to answer at the bar, and Arundel was one of the committee of Lords who carried

this ungracious message to York House. But there were men in the House of Lords to whom the course pursued by Buckingham's party was an insult and a wrong, and who were eager for a chance of stating why they thought it so. That chance now came. On reading the patent for Inns, the Lords sent down to the Tower for Yelverton, who was still a prisoner, to explain the legal forms; and that frank lawyer told them, glancing at Buckingham, that the true cause of his imprisonment was not the error he had made in the City charter, but the service he had done the State in dealing with that patent. Villiers got alarmed at this bold reference to himself; and James came over to the House to screen his pet from blame. But Yelverton, unchecked by royal frowns, turned sharply on the Favourite, crying, in a phrase which was a prelude to the great harangues of Eliot, 'If my Lord of Buckingham had read the articles exhibited in this place against Hugh de Spencer, and knew the danger of displacing officers about the King, he would not have pursued me with such bitterness.' Prince Charles stood up. 'Such words,' he said, 'were scandalous.' Buckingham bade the orator go on, and when his prisoner had closed his speech, the

Marquis moved his close confinement in the Tower. But now a mutinous spirit seized the Lords. The Prince and Marquis spoke in vain. Southampton rose in opposition; his arguments were backed by Say and Sele; and Buckingham's motion, in effect, was put and lost. Next day his Majesty sent word that he was much annoyed with the Peers for suffering any one in that House to compare him, James the First, with such a king as Edward the Second. As to Buckingham and Hugh de Spencer, he left that matter to their lordships' care; but in so far as insult touched himself he took the question up, and should proceed to vindicate his right. This threat was a mistake, as James soon saw; for he was met by a remonstrance from the Peers, and, after some delay, consented to leave the question in their hands.

A scene that should have been a warning to the Court occurred. The notes of Yelverton's offending speech being read, it was suggested that he might be heard in explanation and defence. Lord Arundel, now fawning on the Favourite, objected to a course so favourable to the prisoner. He had spoken; they had heard him; they were there to judge. Lord Spencer rose

to answer Arundel. Lord Spencer was astonished that a Howard should proclaim such doctrine, as that men might be condemned unheard; since two members of that family—the Duke of Norfolk and the Earl of Surrey—had been put to death unheard. 'My lords,' cried Arundel, stung to the quick, 'I do acknowledge that my ancestors have suffered, and it may be for doing the King and country service, at the time, perhaps, when the lord's ancestors that spoke last were keeping sheep.' This answer raised a tumult. Arundel was told he must withdraw his words; a week was given him for repentance; and on still refusing to beg Lord Spencer's pardon, he was sent with a file of halberds to the Tower.

Lord Arundel was only liberated on the prayer of the Prince of Wales, who gave his word that due amends should instantly be made to the offended peer.

While Arundel was yet a prisoner in the Tower, Bacon was brought to the Lieutenant's house; arrested in violation of the King's most solemn pledge. In yielding his cause and place, he had received the King's assurance that the sentence passed upon him should be nothing but a form; his honour would be safe, and even his fortune

would be James's care. Yet after his submission day by day passed by, and James did nothing to remit the penalty and remove the stain. The courtiers knew what caused delay. It was York House, and nothing but York House. Sir Edward Sackville wrote to him, 'If York House were gone, the town were yours.' But Bacon would not buy the town at such a price. 'York House,' he answered, 'is the house wherein my father died, and wherein I first breathed; and there will I yield my last breath, if it please God and the King will give me leave.' Then Buckingham took him from a sick-bed and sent him to the Tower.

He lay in the Lieutenant's house, but only for a single day. 'Good, my lord,' he wrote to Buckingham; 'procure the warrant for my discharge. Death, I thank God, is so far from being unwelcome to me, as I have called for it (as Christian resolution would permit) any time these two months. But to die before the time of his Majesty's grace, and in this disgraceful place, is even the worst that could be.' James was touched, and orders were despatched to Sir Allan Apsley to allow the Lord St. Albans to depart that very night.

But Buckingham had other means of tearing

York House from Bacon, even after the Tower had failed. He got him sent from London, with an order not to come within a dozen miles. What use, then, was a London house? At first the great philosopher thought of his banishment as a passing trial, but, as months flew past and he was still restrained, he listened to Sackville's counsels, sold his lease, and came to reside in his pleasant old lodgings in Coney Court, among the elms and mulberries he had planted in his youth.

Williams, having first been sworn of the Privy Council, and appointed Bishop of Lincoln, got the Seals. 'I should have known who would be my successor,' said the illustrious victim of his arts. But Williams was not satisfied with his crozier and his Seals, the income of a bishop and the state of a Lord Keeper. He hoped to win and wear a Cardinal's hat, as Wolsey had won and worn a Cardinal's hat. But he was minded to retain his smaller livings; and, as Buckingham could deny him nothing, he was said to be 'a perfect diocese in himself—bishop, dean, prebendary, and parson.' Williams laughed at jokes and kept his livings; in the hope of higher things from Rome, and not yet dreaming of his portion in the Tower.

CHAPTER IX.

A SPANISH MATCH.

So long as Villiers stood in front of the party which hated Spain and the Catholic League he was too strong for Suffolk and his faction to assail him. Suffolk and his faction, therefore, had been facing round, trying on a second Favourite the arts by which they had won the first. They would become his friends; they would surround his person; they would form his court; and they would worship him as a god. Young, sensual, inexperienced, how could he resist these flatteries and caresses? If they won him over, all would yet be well; and even if they failed to win him over, they might lessen his power to do them harm. They could not hang about him much without exciting the suspicions of his honest friends.

It was a great point in their favour that he had a Catholic wife; the greater that this Catholic

wife was one who went to church, and bore the name of convert from her faith. A Jesuit who slept one night in Belvoir Castle, could remove next day to Audley End, and secret messages might pass by these safe hands from Lady Suffolk to the Favourite's wife. It was a great point in their favour that he had a wavering Parent, and the greater that this wavering Parent was a woman who attended mass. This Parent was beginning to tire of Williams, grown too lazy and too big for such hard slavery as hers; and 'Little Laud,' a parson of a different stamp, was creeping noiselessly into his place. Laud's person was not comely, his address not taking; for his face was red and blotched, as if from drink, and his discourse was sometimes spotted with unseemly oaths. But then his notions of Church government were sound. Like women of tempestuous passions, she was of the High Church very high. She thought that priests should hold the keys; that women ought to have their spiritual guides; that penances, indulgences, and fasts, were charming things; and that confession was a lady-like and easy way of wiping out her sins. 'Hocus-pocus Laud,' as some folk called him, helped this lady in her spiritual throes, and

gained an influence with her only equalled by the sway of Father Fisher and Doctor Lamb. She sent for Fisher to her house, and Laud was not too proud to gratify her by an 'hocus-pocus' with that famous Jesuit, once a prisoner in the Tower, and now a secret minister of females in distress of mind. Fisher was soon a guest in the lady's house, and Little Laud his visitor and friend.

Helped by such agencies, the Howard family were soon on terms with Buckingham and his kin. Suffolk was often in his closet; Arundel professed to be his servant; Walden begged him to lend his first-born son a name. They let him into secrets known to few. They taught him how to coin his place, and guide his course by help from sorcerers and quacks. All great men had their wizards—what the vulgar called their 'devils,'—who could rule the planets for them. Percy had his Magi; Carr consulted Forman; Villiers had the service of Dr. Lamb. They called in Lady Salisbury to their aid; and this young dame—a wife, a mother—stooped to court and dazzle Villiers, much as Lady Essex, her more lovely and guilty sister, had been led into courting and dazzling Carr.

Not stout of will, the young man's head was

turned, the young man's blood was fired. By cunning arts these veterans of intrigue inspired him with some portion of their spirit. The Dutch he came to see might grow too strong. A good deal could be urged against the Huguenot cause in France. The 'Queen of Hearts' was married to a vain and restless prince; and, while he pitied her misfortunes, he began to see that she had grievous faults. Inspired by these new friends, he left the popular party on the final question of a Spanish match for Charles.

This match was now the hope of every man, from Suffolk downwards, who desired to overthrow the system and the settlement of Elizabeth. A Catholic bride for the Prince of Wales would give them in due time a Catholic Queen. The children of that Catholic Queen would grow up in the hands of nuns and priests. A grandson of King Philip would be King of England. Under such a prince the country might be forced, as under Mary, to submit her neck to the Roman yoke.

King James had long been dreaming of a Spanish match for Charles; and Diego de Sarmiento, Condé de Gondomar, the Spanish minister in London, had received a hint to whisper in his

ear, though not to give him a certain pledge, that he might have the Doña Maria for the Prince of Wales, if only the Escorial and White Hall could come to terms. When first her hand was proffered to the Prince, Doña Maria was exactly six years old!

One day the council in Madrid, then sorely puzzled how to act in London so as not to lose in credit, yet to save some portion of the ducats paid to admirals and secretaries, saw a sudden light. 'I have just been reading in an English volume,' cried Pastrana, one of the royal bastards, 'how the Queen Elizabeth of that country made pretence of a match with the Duke of Anjou, never intending to wed that prince, but only to baffle France, and gain her ends by craft. Why should we not do like the Queen, and trick our enemies with the prospect of a Spanish match?' Upon this hint they spake; and then began, in studied words of falsehood, the amusing comedy of 'the Spanish match.'

Much time was gained, and many ducats saved; for James, in prospect of this match, was brought to regard the Spaniards as his friends; and Philip saw less need to pension ministers and secretaries when he got their secrets from the

King himself. A portrait of the Doña, with a face of pea-green tint, was hung in the Prince's gallery at White Hall, and every one was ordered to salute it as the image of his future Queen. Gondomar, a Jew in blood, and probably in creed, could hardly see this capping to the Bride without a smile; he knew too well his Spanish olive was forbidden fruit.

No love was lost between the Prince and the Infanta. When they were old enough to know their minds, they fell into fiery scorn, instead of into fervent love. Maria would not hear of Charles the Heretic, as her people called him; Charles the Heretic saw but little to admire in such a pea-green piece of flesh and blood. 'A nice bed-fellow you will have!' sneered the girl's confessor; 'this heretic will be the father of your children, and will then be burnt in hell.' She told her ladies she would rather take the veil, though she had no great calling to the Church, than marry such a partner. Charles was no less free. 'If it were not a sin,' he sighed, on turning from her portrait on the wall, 'it would be well if princes could marry two wives: one wife to please the politicians, a second wife to please themselves.'

Yet Charles—now come of age, and hence,

as Gondomar perceived, the central figure on the scene—was willing to go on, if only he could have the lady for a wife on easy terms. He cared but little for her pea-green face, as that of a girl who might be loved and kissed by him; but even his sober blood beat wildly at a hint from Spain that a daughter of the Kaisers might become the mother of his son. Gondomar dropped that hint, and Charles was Gondomar's dupe for life.

In rear of these intrigues of the palace, the confessional, and the court, stood the English Commons—fixed as death against this policy of asking for a Spanish bride. To marry an Infanta was to dally with the Beast! Gondomar took no heed of such, except when blood was stirred by news of some great fight like that of Prague, on which they smashed his windows, stopped his coach, and threatened to hang him in the streets. He fled to his chamber, called his priests, and asked for the consecrated bread. He was no hero, as the London lads found out; but he could press for his revenge as cruelly as Shylock for his pound of flesh.

One day the Condé, who resided in a house, with a big garden, in Gravel Lane, Hounds-

ditch, was being carried in a litter down Fenchurch Street, past a tradesman's shop at which three lads were standing. 'Sirrah,' cried one lad to his fellow, 'knowest thou what goes there?' 'Why?' asked the second, 'what goes there?' 'The devil in a dung-cart!' laughed the city wit. A servant of the Condé heard them jeer, and thinking they were laughing at his master, yelled, 'You shall see Bridewell for your mirth ere long.' 'What!' quoth the lad in answer, 'shall we go to Bridewell for such a dog as thou?' and going straight to the liveried flunkey, slapped his face and tripped him by the kerb. The Condé wrote to the Lord Mayor, Sir Martin Lumley, who admitted that the boys were wrong, and offered to give them a sharp reproof; but Gondomar insisted that they should be lashed; and Lumley, much against his will, was forced to give an order that they should be whipped from Temple Bar to Newgate Street. As usual, they were tied to carts, and beaten through the public streets; a great mob following them and mocking them; until the news ran through the shops that these young lads were flogged at Gondomar's suit; on which the city boys turned out with staves and knives. A hundred rushed upon the carts

near Temple Bar, set free the lads, and beat the officers. A cry was raised that more than a thousand were coming down Fetter Lane. The sheriffs' officers now fled, and hid themselves in slums and stews.

Gondomar, still more angry, sent to Lumley, asking how the city was governed, that such things could be done? To which the Lord Mayor answered that he should not give account of his government to a minister of Spain. Not answer! Gondomar swore that Lumley should be punished for his insolence; but on seeking the advice of Catholic friends—who warned him that his house in Gravel Lane would fall some night about his ears—he simply asked from James for vengeance on the 'prentice boys. The King rode up to town, and made a speech, in which he told the citizens they must either satisfy Gondomar, or he would put a garrison in the city, break their charter, and rule them by the sword. He ordered the lads to be whipped again, and they were lashed so cruelly that one of them died beneath his blows.

The knights and burghers in the House of Commons were still more troublesome to Gondomar than the apprentice lads. From hour to hour his creatures brought him news of what was

done; and, if a word were dropt against his master, he was quickly closeted with the King, demanding that the speaker should be lodged in jail. Gondomar had a deep dislike to Parliaments, and he urged the King to put them down. A king, he said, was not his own master—not the equal of other kings—so long as he was teazed by subjects who could meet to judge him. A scene at court came hard upon that scene in Fenchurch Street. Misled by hints that patriots ought to 'strike while the iron was hot,' some men of the class who liked to be popular in the shires and yet acceptable at court—the 'Undertakers,' Digges and Phelips—went on striking when the iron was no longer hot; not seeing that their work was done the moment they had put the Favourite in a way to get York House, they framed a petition to the King, in which they begged his Majesty to draw his sword, to place himself in front of the reforming states, to put down Papists with a powerful hand, to point his weapon at the King of Spain, and wed his son to a Protestant wife. A copy of this paper was (by treachery) in Gondomar's hands before it had been voted by the House of Commons; and on the night when it was carried, Gondomar

wrote these words to James:—'Your Parliament is insolent and seditious; and but for my belief that your Majesty will punish these people, I should quit the kingdom. I must do so, as your Majesty would be no longer king; and I have no troops to castigate them.' James was furious; not with the foreigner, who had dared to write such things, but with the Commons, who had put the wishes of his country into words. He was insulted in his place. He could not suffer them to judge him. They were ignorant of his policy and his means. Aforetime he had left them to their talk; but he could never allow them to turn this grace against himself. He would punish such speeches in the future, both when they were sitting and when they rose.

The House, in answer to a threat which struck at their right of speech, drew up and entered on their books a protest, reasserting their free and ancient right. Then James rode up from the country, called for the journals, and in presence of his Council and his judges tore out the leaf on which this protest stood. His act was taken as a call to arms. Villiers bore the news himself to Gondomar, and Gondomar wrote to Madrid the most joyful letter he had penned

for many a day. 'It is the best thing,' he wrote, 'for Spain and Catholicism that has happened since Luther began to preach.' The King was acting like a king, and if the quarrel spread, he would be drawn into the arms of Spain. Gondomar took care the quarrel should go on. If James would save his crown, the Condé whispered, he must thrust these traitors from the court and lay them by the heels; and James, too dull to see the craft by which his family were being ruined, ordered Digges into Ulster on a pretended mission, commanded Pym to keep his chamber, and committed Coke and Phelips to the Tower.

Wentworth, who had proved his gifts, was taken into favour and preferred. Some courtiers said he would be lifted to the House of Lords; but they were wrong; for such high proof of favour he had yet to wait some years.

One farther step, and Gondomar could dispose of England as he liked. The King had only to dissolve his Parliament, and in parting from his factious critics break with parliaments for ever, even as the Kings of Aragon and Castile had broken with their parliaments for ever. This stage was nearly reached. The

Houses were dispersed, and Gondomar got a promise that they should not meet again. 'It is now fixed,' he wrote home gaily, 'that the King will not call another Parliament so long as he shall live.' And then he summed up all his gains in one joyous sentence:—'The King will not be able to help his children on the Rhine; he will not be able to oppose the Catholics anywhere.'

Not one of his English dupes—not Charles, not Buckingham, not Laud, not Wentworth—could perceive, as yet, that Gondomar was leading them through violent means to yet more violent ends; that he was driving all these victims to the Tower, the assassin's knife, the court of justice, and the headsman's axe!

CHAPTER X.

SPANIOLIZING.

THE court was Spaniolizing; and the darling of that court, as great with Charles as he had always been with James, was riding in the van. Pimps, pensioners, quacks—all 'things of Spain'—were now in fashion, and were with him in his house and in the Park. Williams and Laud were friends of Spain, each hoping to procure from Rome, through her, a Cardinal's hat. Apartments in York House were given to Doctor Lamb, who was employed to toil for him in secret, to bewitch fair women, to enhance his charms, to cast his fortunes, and to rule his star. The house in which the *Novum Organum* had been lately finished lent a shelter to this quack.

George Calvert, Lake's successor, warned by Lake's misfortunes, hastened to join the stronger party. Calvert, a Yorkshire lad, with empty pockets and a silent tongue, had spent his man-

hood in Cecil's office, keeping secrets, checking files, and copying letters, till his master, finding his old friends, grown fat with spoil of power, were falling from him, raised this prudent drudge into a Councillor of State, and left him, when he died, a chief executor of his will. Calvert wrote a good hand, and James, now minded to be secretary himself, set Calvert at his former desk. In six or seven years the lad became Sir George, and was in fact, if not in name, a Secretary of State. He clung to every man who rose at court—to Carr, to Bacon, and to Villiers; but he only clung to them while they were rising men, and quitted them the instant they began to fall. His Yorkshire wit had warned him not to rise too fast, since rising slowly meant rising safely; and his rule of life was never to provoke ill-will by sudden airs, to run on easily with the tide, and get his keel on high, safe ground before the ebb.

For years he had denied himself the luxury of opinions, saying he was too poor to keep a soul of his own; but when he had to give his yea and nay, he was compelled to look about him and to choose a side. Which side? He never dreamt of asking which was right. He only asked him-

self which side would win. No man knew better than Calvert what was passing in the closets of White Hall. The poor old King was but a king in name. The Howards were again at court, and Gondomar was daily at the side of Charles. All Catholics were looking up. His patron Buckingham, like his colleague Wentworth, was at work upon the Spanish match. That Charles would marry the Infanta he was sure. A dozen years might pass, and then that Spanish girl of pea-green face would be the English queen.

A goodly party was of Calvert's mind, and many of the greatest people were preparing for a change of creed by hearing mass, receiving priests at midnight, and submitting to the Church of Rome. The Queen secreted priests in an upper room. The Favourite's wife threw off her mask. The Parent listened to that Father Fisher who had been concerned in the Powder Plot. One-half the Council was accused, on no light grounds, of floating with the tide; and Calvert, not to be the last and least, threw in his lot with Gondomar and the rising cause. He called a priest, and reconciled his soul with Rome.

When he had taken this bold step, his prudence told him he must cling for very life to Spain.

The service he could do was great. A Protestant colony had been planted in Virginia; he could plant a Catholic colony by its side. A Huguenot power was rising at La Rochelle, which people were beginning to call a second Holland; he might hinder James from going to the help of his natural friends. A Puritan feeling reigned in the royal fleet; and he could fill the ships with creatures of his own. An English princess, driven from her throne by the Catholic League, was at the Hague; he might contrive to keep her there an exile all her life. Would not these services be worth their price? Gondomar knew what Calvert cost; and while the Spaniard ruled at court, the Secretary of State was sure to be a prosperous man.

'The Spanish ambassador directs affairs,' a courtier wrote; 'and no ambassador ever had such power.' The power which Gondomar had won was used by him to two great ends — one near and one remote. His foremost purpose was, to hold back England from her natural place in front of the reforming states; his second, to seduce her into making such concessions to the Catholics as would wound her people, drive them into factions, and prepare for her absorption in the Universal Church.

The first was his more pressing care; for Spain was just then making, with her allies of the Catholic League, her final efforts to regain what Rome had lost. The twelve years' truce was ready to expire; the League was ready to advance. Spinola, master of the Lower Rhine, could march at once upon the United Provinces; while Tilly, master of Bohemia, could hurry through a country too divided in opinion to resist his army, towards the Upper Rhine. If England could be held in check while one by one the Protestant states were overrun, Gondomar's presence in London would be worth an army and a fleet to Spain.

At times his task was hard; for every man not paid in money or misled by priests was clamouring for a war against the Beast. The King was wavering in his mood; for while he snatched most eagerly at a Spanish bride for Charles, he could not utterly forget his daughter's cry for help. Elizabeth, the young and lovely girl who had been sent abroad as England's pledge to the reforming states, was now a fugitive; the victim of her faith—expelled alike from Heidelberg and Prague. Though Gondomar was cunning, he could hardly keep the Prince of Wales from joining in the popular demand for war. His only refuge

was the match; and he assured the Prince of Wales, that love would give him more than he could hope to gain by war: the restoration of his sister's province, credit in the Kaiser's councils, and a family union with the King of Spain.

Charles heard him with delight. He loved his sister, and was eager to replace her on the Upper Rhine; but he was cold and vain, and caught too eagerly at offers which implied relief for her, yet cost no moral effort and no personal risk.

Gondomar talked so much about this match, and heard so much from others of the good which it would bring to Spain, that he, the very minister of deception, fell into his own elaborate toils, and actually began to wish the marriage could be brought about. Why should it not? If Charles could only be converted to the Roman Church, the treaty might go on in earnest, and his kingdom might become what Naples had become—a fortalice of Spain. Could Charles be reached? He fancied that if Charles were in Madrid, he could be won; for Gondomar, a Spaniard, thought no human virtue could resist the arguments of a Jesuit doctor and the blandishments of an imperial court. He spoke to Charles. Why should the Prince of Wales not go and see his

bride? The King and Queen of Spain would greet him royally. Hidalgoes would be proud to swell his train, and lovely doñas would be sure to shower on him their radiant smiles. 'Dismiss all state,' the Condé whispered; 'come alone. A friend, a servant, are enough companions for a knight going forth in search of his lady-love.' The Prince sat listening to the tempter's voice, not dreaming of the rage and shame that such a plot would bring into every English cheek. 'Could they go safely?' Charles inquired. 'Go safely!' cried the Spaniard, in affected wonder. 'Yes!' said Charles, 'would no one try to stop him?' Gondomar could but smile. Bright eyes might take him captive; loving lips might set him free. Was not the minister himself going home to Spain? If accidents should happen on the road, he, Gondomar, would be there to set things straight!

By Suffolk's arts and Lady Salisbury's smiles the Favourite had been won to back this policy of a Spanish bride for Charles; and, when the Spaniard called him into secret council on the Prince's journey, Villiers leaped to it at once. Yes, George would go with Charles to Spain. The thing was done. No word was said to James, for these young men and their adviser had begun

to reign. Their secret must be kept. The Parent must not know. When Gondomar said 'Good-bye' to Bacon, and the fallen Chancellor wished him 'a pleasant passover,' in allusion to his Hebrew blood, no one suspected that he bore with him a secret promise that the Prince of Wales would follow in his wake to Spain.

On two points Gondomar had been told to keep his watchful eyes—the Cinque Ports and the Narrow Seas; for while the Dutch were strong at sea, his master must have steadfast friends in the English waters and the English ports. Two officers watched the Downs; a Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, an Admiral of the Narrow Seas. For many years Northampton had been Lord Warden, and the kings of Spain had paid him for his treacheries a thousand pounds a-year. For still more years Sir William Monson had been Admiral in the Narrow Seas, and all those years the kings of Spain had paid him for his treacheries three hundred and fifty pounds a-year. This money had been wisely spent. Northampton died; Zouch was made Lord Warden in his stead. Monson fell; but his command was given to Sir Francis Howard. Gondomar had still a servant in Dover Castle and in the Downs.

Abroad, in the actual field of conflict, Gondomar met with less success; though even there he found some means of wasting and corrupting the English bands. A stream of English youth was flowing from the Thames into the Scheldt and Maas, from which it crept into the camps and cities of the Rhine. This stream he would not dam; but he could set his spies to watch, defame, and hamper all the leading men. No soldier could unsheathe his sword, no orator could make a speech, in favour of the reforming states, without provoking Gondomar's vindictive wrath. He satirized Sir Horace Vere, commanding at Heidelberg for the Queen of Hearts. He caused the arrest of Captain North, returning from the Spanish main, and caused him to be flung into the Tower. Phelips and Coke, his recent victims, lay in adjacent cells to North; and no long time elapsed ere, on the same suggestion, they were joined in their imprisonment by De Vere.

CHAPTER XI.

HENRY DE VERE.

HENRY DE VERE, the eighteenth Earl of Oxford, was the first of English peers. Compared with this young earl, the Stanleys and the Howards were but peers of yesterday. De Vere came down in one unbroken line from Alberic, that Count de Ghisnes who fought and conquered at King Stephen's side. For twenty reigns his sires had held the office of Lord High Chamberlain; and nearly all these reigns had kept some story of their wisdom in the council and their prowess in the field. Sir Francis Vere and Sir Horatio Vere were members of this gallant house.

Earl Henry was a youth of daring spirit and irregular life, who ran his course of pleasure, not in London only, but in every town from Paris to the City in the Sea. In gondola and mask, no young patrician was so gay; and having health and money, he could buy those flatteries and

delights of life for which a poorer man could only sigh. The times had made him grave. He learnt in Venice that the Spaniards were not willing to renew the truce; he heard that every noble heart at home was swelling with the hope of war. Fame told him that his kinsman, Horace Vere, was fighting for the good old cause, and that his noble friend, the youthful Earl of Essex, was repairing to the Rhenish camp. This news broke on his pleasures like a roll of drums. Adieu to his signoras and his frolics! Riding fast through Lombardy and France, he came to London, where he sought a place in front; as ready, should his famous kinsman choose him, either to lead a company or to trail a pike. He crossed to Germany and fought as one who bore his name should fight. No man confronted with a higher courage than De Vere the hardships of campaigning life, until, the season spent, he was recalled, like Essex, by a royal mandate, to his place in the House of Lords.

The presence of such peers as Oxford and Essex in the Rhenish camps was gall to Gondomar, who saw with jaundiced eye how quick the golden youth of England were to rush upon his master's pikes. When Oxford came to his

house in Fleet Street he was dogged by eyes as keen and ears as quick as any in the pay of Holy Church. His words were noted, and inflamed. Unused to curb his tongue, the young Earl spoke as fiercely as he fought. He could not hear with patience of abandoning the Queen of Hearts. One day, when warm with wine, he broke into a furious speech against the King of Spain. His words were borne to Gravel Lane, and Gondomar drove at once to see the King. Ere nightfall Oxford was a prisoner in the Tower.

Oxford was not the only victim of the Condé's will that none of these English nobles should disturb his policy on the Rhine. Southampton, now a wiser man than in his headlong youth, was a devoted friend to the Queen of Hearts; he made his house the centre of much irregular buzzing and intrigue; and once, if not more than once, he had proposed to carry an army to the Rhine. Southampton was a dangerous foe to Spain, not only as a peer of high connexions and broad estates, but as a Councillor to whom all secrets of the court were known. At any cost this foe must be removed; and Gondomar dropt his hints so well, that James consented to arrest him on a vague suspicion of his writing under-

hand some letters to the Queen of Hearts. The thing was done so quickly that Southampton was arrested as he rose from the council-table at White Hall, and, in the midst of protests, was committed to the Tower.

One man had sense enough to see that such an exercise of power would lash the country into riot. This one man was Williams, who was not so blinded by the Cardinal's hat in prospect as to dream that England could be easily reconciled to a Spanish match. He ran to Buckingham, and showed him the danger of imprisoning men like Oxford and Southampton. How were the Council to explain such things? Could they tell the world that two such men were thrown into the Tower because they loved the Queen of Hearts? Two-thirds of England shared their passion. They must trim their sails some other way. The Favourite felt that Williams spoke the truth; that Gondomar had led him to commit a great mistake. He rode at once to the Tower; paid visits to his prisoners in their cells; and so arranged affairs that in a week the popular and indignant Earls were both at large.

But Gondomar was not beaten yet. If Oxford could not be immured in the Tower, he might be

sent to sea, in what would seem a service of defence and honour, but would really be a service to his master's arms. He might be sent against 'the pirates'—those Free Rovers of the Sea, who were regarded in Madrid and Seville as the demoniacal enemies of Spain. Villiers, who was always either hot as fire or cold as flint, requested Oxford to assume command as Admiral of the Fleet, and sail in search of these pirate ships. It was a thankless and unpopular service, which he soon threw up in weariness of soul; aware too late that on his flag-ship he was only Gondomar's tool and dupe. He cast about him for revenge. An Earl of Oxford could not stoop to Gondomar, a fellow whom he called an adventurer, and believed to be an apostate Jew. His ire could only fall on Villiers and the Villiers gang; and he was able to inflict on them a striking loss and a bitter shame.

For Kit, the youngest of these Villiers, now grown up, and decked with golden spurs, was ready for a wife; and his providing Parent swept on Lady Howard, heiress to the Bassetts of Blore, in Stafford county, widow of Henry, one of Suffolk's younger sons. She thought the Howards would have helped her; but the wealthy widow was a

Bassett, not a Howard, and she laughed at these proposals for her money and her hand. Sir Kit was both a lout and sot, addicted to low company, while she was then being courted by the finest gentleman alive—that William Cavendish, the friend of Bacon, who was afterwards renowned as Duke of Newcastle in the Civil Wars.

Kit left all wooing to his mother, who inspected those dark courts and alleys out of which such golden damsels as Lord Compton's treasure had been drawn. For blood was not so much required by Kit as gold; since George, if Kit were rich enough, could deck him with the coronet of an earl. A fortune, great as any in the city, was the child of Sebastian Harvey, alderman of Cheape, a Staffordshire man, a member of the Ironmongers' Company, whose father, Sir James Harvey, had been one of Elizabeth's lord mayors. This child was worth a hundred thousand pounds. Lady Buckingham sent her agents into Cheape. Old Harvey would not hear of such a thing; his daughter was too young; she was not fourteen yet; and years must pass before she could be pestered with a lover's suit. The alderman was chosen mayor, and dubbed a knight; and as he still held out, the King was brought upon the

scene. James asked the city magnate to bestow his girl on Kit; and as the mayor was gruff, he rode in person to the Mansion House, and begged him as a favour to consent. James spoke in vain. The lord mayor loved his child; he wished her to be happy in her youth; and he was sure she would not be so as the wife of such a lout.

A third quest brought the Parent back to court. Francis, Lord Norreys of Rycote, had an only child, a girl named Bessie, who would have his money and his vast estate. This girl was promised by her father to a gentleman of the bed-chamber, Edward Wray, a creature of Buckingham, a friend of Oxford, and a son of Sir William Wray. Buckingham had made this match, and Norreys had been raised in the peerage by the title of Earl of Berkshire and Viscount Thame for giving his consent. But when the King had failed with Harvey, Lady Buckingham thought it might be well to take the Lady Bessie from Edward Wray, and give her as a wife to Kit. Not only was the lady rich, a lady in her own right, but being an only child, her offspring would have claims to the earldom of Berkshire and the viscounty of Thame. Was such a prize to be

thrown away? The Parent sent for Wray, and told the lover he must give up Lady Bessie and betake himself elsewhere.

Wray might have yielded up his prize in fear, but Oxford was at hand, and Oxford felt no fear of living man. His care of Edward Wray and Lady Bess was not unmixed with dreams of his revenge for Frances Coke, as well as for his lodging in the Tower. The facts about his early love have not been proved, and no one knows the grounds on which the mother of that girl declared that in the eyes of God the Earl of Oxford and her child were man and wife. That girl, if he had ever loved her, was another man's wife—a most unhappy and disloyal wife—and he was wooing, in the Lady Diana Cecil, a fairer and a richer maid than even Frances Coke. But he was young and light of heart; John Villiers had done him wrong; and he would be revenged on Kit.

The Earl of Berkshire—weak and vain, if not unsound in mind—raised no objection to this transfer of his child from Wray to Kit, provided always that she gave her free consent. But Lady Bessie would not change her troth. Kit's mother pressed her suit; and Bessie's father answered they must wait. The Parent raged and fumed;

the Earl snatched down a cross-bow from a rack and shot himself to death.

Great pains were taken to conceal this hideous tale. The coroner was told to keep his secret; but the truth could not be hidden from a daughter's eyes. She saw a father whom she loved driven mad by that abominable gang, and in her days of mourning she had time to steel her heart against them.

Oxford learned one morning that the Villiers folk were urging Kit to seize his bride, to carry her off by force, to wed her privately, and trust to love and fortune for the rest. A lady, it was urged on Kit, soon learns to like a man who risks the world for love; and James, he was assured, could easily be won to pardon and forget the breach of law. But Kit took much persuading to this act. No doubt the King might pardon him for his brother's sake; but who could tell him whether Lady Bessie would submit to force? She was a girl of spirit. What could he do if she should scream and fight? Four or five servants might suffice to carry her off; but who could keep her quiet when they were left alone in the dead of night? He must have time to think of it.

Then Oxford spoke to Wray. That youth was sure of Lady Bessie, and a plan for an elopement and a private marriage was contrived. On Berkshire's tragic death, the Parent, fearing that Lady Bessie would run away, had placed her in Montgomery's house; as much in custody as Catharine Manners and Frances Coke had been before their marriages to George and John. Possession was the Villiers' rule of law; but Lady Bessie had a genius of her own; and one dark morning in the early March she crept out of bed unnoticed, put her cloak on, hurried through the gates, and fled into the town on foot. Wray and his friends were waiting for her near St. Aldermary Church; a clergyman was ready to perform the rite; and twenty minutes afterwards Edward Wray and Lady Bessie were man and wife. They spent their honeymoon in Oxford's house.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MATTER OF HOLLAND.

ONE triumph more and Gondomar's task was done. An artist in his craft, he had murdered Raleigh, he had pensioned admirals and secretaries, he had kept the Queen of Hearts in exile, he had lodged the bravest and most eloquent of his enemies in the Tower. He had engaged the king in a secret treaty, which implied, as he conceived, the reduction of England to a Papal province at no distant day. He had procured from Charles a secret pledge that he would run away from London, and, without a word of warning to the Council, put himself in the power of Spain. All these were signal triumphs of his art, and yet his masterpiece was still to come. Before he quitted London he entrapped the King, the Prince of Wales, the Marquis of Buckingham, together with Lord Digby, who had lived in Spain, and knew its

policy, in a plot so foul as to have left all those concerned in it eternal legacies of hate and shame. This plot was known to the conspirators as 'the Matter of Holland,' under which title it is darkly mentioned in many of the letters from James to Buckingham, Digby, and the Prince of Wales.

The Dutch, whose patience had been sorely tried by such state criminals as our Wardens of the Cinque Ports, our Admirals of the Narrow Seas—all paid in Spanish gold to do them harm —had sometimes, as they grew in strength, turned sharply on these enemies in disguise. Our trade had suffered checks; our seamen had been hustled in the ports; our flag had been offended in the Downs. But, more than all, these Dutch had pushed their way into the East, and won such favour with the natives as enabled them to raise pretensions to a full monopoly of trade. They had driven the Portuguese from Amboyna and the Moluccas, and the clove trade was entirely in their hands.

Some English skippers put into their ports; the Dutch repelled them, and the sailors came to blows. A score of lives were lost. Complaints were laid before the Council, and the Lord-Admiral, as chief of our naval force, was called

upon to redress this wrong. But Buckingham had no fleets to send into those distant seas, and when he asked for justice at the Hague, he heard a story of injustice from the other side.

Exposed to this loud clamour for redress, he opened his heart to Gondomar, who was now become, like Dr. Lamb the sorcerer, his daily councillor and guest. One day, in pique, he called the Dutch a set of rogues, and hoped the King of Spain would some day break their pride. 'Why should not you,' said Gondomar, 'make war on them as well as we? You have your wrongs to right. These burghers take your trade, your money, and your land. What have you left? Your monarchy? In no long time, they will take away your crown, and set up one of their republics in your homes.' The Favourite turned to Digby, who was standing near him. Digby had just come home from Spain; he knew the court, the country, and the language well; and he was one of those cold ministers of state, who close their eyes on popular and religious pleas. Believing that it would be wise to connect his sovereign with the Kaisers, he could keep no terms with zealots who, on merely moral grounds, objected to a Spanish match. What were the

United Provinces to him? When Digby heard the Spaniard's words, instead of rising on him, stung with shame, as Eliot would have risen, he coolly asked what part in the spoil of war would fall to England's share? 'They used to tell me in Madrid,' he added, 'you would give up the revolted provinces, if we cared to take them, for a trifle.' Gondomar had no power to cede a province; even to suggest the seizure of a province. Every post from Spain informed him of his master's preparations to subdue the rebels and annex their country to his crown. What Antwerp was, that Leyden and Amsterdam were soon to be. But Gondomar saw the advantage of entangling Villiers in an odious plot, by which he might turn his flank, in case the Favourite should be afterwards driven by public clamour into taking up a line of policy more favourable to the Dutch. What part? he answered, turning round to Digby; well, he could not say, off-hand; but thought that if the English joined his master in restoring order in the rebellious provinces, they might look in reason for a great reward. But what, asked Digby, was a great reward? Could they have Holland? Yes, he thought so. Zeeland? Yes, he thought even Zeeland; but he added, that the English

must be ready to give and take. If Spain should yield two provinces, near their seas and ports, they must recall their planters and marauders from the west. America belonged to Spain. Elsewhere an empire waited for the English ships. Cathay and Java wooed them with fragrant winds, and he could show them maps of islands, rich in tropical fruits—in nutmeg, cloves, and pepper—such as they might quickly seize and cheaply hold. The Dutch had driven the Portugals away; and why should not the English drive out the Dutch? Their cause was good; their means were equal to their cause. Those rascals who had murdered English seamen, should be taught respect for the English flag. On every side the King would gain. A dangerous neighbour would be overthrown; the rights of kings would be restored. Two naval and industrious provinces would be added to his crown. All those who injured him would meet their fate, and isles and waters would be opened to his merchants on the line. The kings of England and Spain, he urged, had only to combine their forces, and the Dutch republicans must fall.

Villiers and Digby listened to the Spaniard's words; not feeling that, for them, such words

were shame and doom. They sat, they listened, they inquired, and after weighing what he urged, they struck a bargain; leaving him to frame his case in such a way that it might seem to be an offer made by them to him, and not by him to them!

This 'Matter of Holland' was a secret; a 'supreme secret.' Villiers and Digby swore to keep it. Not a soul, except the Prince of Wales, must share it; not a Councillor, not an Admiral, not a Secretary of State. The Prince was sworn and told. About the King? Well, can we trust him? asked the Spaniard. Yes, if he be sworn, said Villiers. Sworn! but would he swear? The Prince and Marquis undertook that he should swear and keep his oath. No other? None.

Then rose the question of ways and means. Spinola might be trusted to do his share; but how would England go into the field? What forces could she raise against the Dutch, and where would she employ them to ensure success? Some plan must be agreed upon, which Gondomar could forward, though in utmost secresy, to his court. But here their wits were foiled; for since they dared not speak of what they meant to do, how could they raise an army and equip a fleet?

The King took counsel with his son, and Villiers spent much time in Gravel Lane. A hundred projects were discussed, and thrown aside. At length they hit upon a scheme. Some seven or eight thousand English volunteers were serving the Dutch republic; men of the class, if not the rank, of Oxford, Essex, Grey, and Vere; and these three plotters (James, the Prince of Wales, and Buckingham) agreed with Gondomar that secret orders should be sent from London to the volunteers, commanding them to rise, at a given signal on their allies, put them to the sword, and seize upon their towns! A fleet should sail under Buckingham to aid these mutineers, and Charles might pass the straits with an army, occupy their ports, and take possession of their soil.

Both James and Charles consented that this infamous proposal should be drafted in their names and sent to Spain, as though it were a project of their own. Madrid received that writing gladly; not as a project they could entertain; for no one in Madrid desired to see the old red cross afloat once more in Flushing, Texel, and the Brill; but as a paper which would damn, both personally and politically, the King of England and the Prince of Wales. On one point

only doubt was felt by Spain. Was England strong enough to undertake this scheme alone? If so, the Provinces might be seized before Spinola could have mastered the outlets of the Maas and Scheldt; and Spain would lose the Provinces to an enemy she was plotting to betray. This question, whether James and Charles were as strong as they were base, was laid before the Cardinal Albrecht in Brussels, who was warned to keep an eye on the English ports and camps. His comments on this project of campaign were brief:—the English garrisons would not rise; the fleet was not in trim to fight; the army of Prince Charles was not yet raised.

Thus England, in the persons of her King and Prince, was drawn into an act of treachery towards the states for which her noblest heroes —Sydneys, Raleighs, Greys, and Veres—had proudly shed their blood; and neither King nor Prince could see that he was guilty of a crime against religion, policy, and public faith!

CHAPTER XIII.

SEA AFFAIRS.

For three or four years, the liking of Villiers and Eliot for each other had been left untouched by public feuds. They lived apart, and while they rarely met, they kept their early love and boyish trust. Sir John appeared to give up public life, excepting as the officer of his friend, and leave with yet more ardent patriots than himself the task of breaking the Spanish match. Not having a seat in the session of 1621, he had no part in that Protest which the King had torn from the journals, and escaped all risk of lodging in the Tower with Coke and Phelips. Living at Port Eliot with his fair young wife, he reared a band of darlings round his knees; first John, then Richard, Edward, Bessie, Nicolas; and frailer ones, who came and went like early blooms. He only left his home when called on duty; but these calls came often;

and he spent much time in busy seaport towns. His duties were to watch the coasts from Saltash to Lyme; to press the men for service; to keep his eye on pirates; to report on wrecks and salvage; and to see that Buckingham's rights as Lord-Admiral were not infringed.

These rights of the Lord-Admiral in the western ports were many and of many kinds. The post was paid in fines and fees; in fines and fees amounting to ten thousand pounds a-year; of which great sum the crown allowed him but three hundred marks. The Admiral levied toll on every side. He granted licenses to trade; he sold the right of supplying stores; he made and unmade officers at his whim. The royal navy was his personal estate; and everything in a ship from hull to pennon was expected to yield him grist. He had his lien on the shipwright's tools and sailor's beer, no less than on the captain's papers and the gunner's pay. He took the lion's share of every seizure made at sea. All prizes passed into his hands; all enemies' property fell into his courts. He took his own from wrecks, and from the goods of enemies captured in time of war. He had a personal interest, therefore, in naval warfare; first, because his office gave him the right

to a tenth of all alien property seized on the proclamation of war coming out; and, second, because the naval operations were certain to fill his coffers with lawful prize. In times of peace, he counted on the profits to be gained by the seizure of pirates' goods.

In the reign of James the First the most singular side of our social and political life was that connected with the sea and sea affairs.

That peace with Spain, which gave a pension to Cecil, a prison to Raleigh, left unsettled nearly all the points on which the English people had set their hearts. If Philip paid for peace, he understood that he was buying rights which he could never win by arms. Among these rights he put a claim to exclude the flags of all nations—English, Dutch, and others—from the Southern seas. Some local ports and local trade he might allow such nations to possess, but he denied their right to enter the Straits of Gibraltar, to cruise in the Levant, to cross the Atlantic Ocean, and to land on the western soil. The Midland Sea was a Spanish lake; the North Atlantic was a Spanish main. On every sea his flag was to be lord of all. No English were to trade of right with Italy and Greece,

and in the chiefest articles were not to trade at all. They must not carry passengers from port to port; they must not deal in arms and guns; they must not sell the natives iron, tin, and lead. Skippers who should break these Spanish rules were to be seized as pirates, flung into jails, and either hung as felons or sold as slaves.

At no time could an English council stoop so low as to admit such claims in words, but under James the First a board of pensioners could submit to facts. Our traders sent out ships; but only at their private risk. The Crown would give them no security for trade, and even when their cargoes had been seized, their crews condemned, the State could seldom be induced to seek redress. Who was to seek redress for them? The councillors? Most of them were paid to shut their eyes. The admirals? In England, as in Spain, the admirals took tithe on every ship and cargo seized at sea. Unable to get justice done at court, the merchants laid a statement of their wrongs before the House of Commons; giving such details of their wrongs as blanched the cheek and fired the veins of every one who listened to their tale.

Here was one of the stories laid before the House of Commons, while the great Sea Captain lay a prisoner in the Tower:

A ship of six-score tons and eighteen men, with spices, drugs, and indigo, on board, was hailed near Rhodes by a Spanish admiral, and told in haughty voice to give up all the goods on board belonging to either Jews or Turks. This ship was the 'Trial,' bound for London, and had no such goods on board. The Spaniard, who suspected her of being a war-ship, and of taking a sail, a gun, and hawser from a French barque, declared the purser should confess his crimes. This purser produced his bill of lading, piped his crew on deck, and showed his hold well stuffed with cargo; evidence of his being employed in honourable trade; but the Spaniard swore it was all a lie; the 'Trial' was a pirate ship; the crew was a pirate crew. That Spanish admiral seized the purser; strung him by the arms to a yard; hung weights about his heels; and lashed a savage goat to his dangling legs. At each addition to the pain that Spaniard called on his victim to confess his guilt. He served the crew as he had served the purser; starved them on bread and water; blocked them in holes; and slung them

by the hands and feet. He kept them at sea for sixty days; yet neither purser nor seaman could be got to sign a lie. On landing at Messina, the admiral flung them into jail; the jail of galley-slaves; where these poor lads were fed on dirty rations, beaten on the feet with rods, drawn upon beams, and lodged in dismal vaults, until the hair fell off their heads, the blood in their veins turned pale, and one by one they drooped and died. When only four were left alive, mere ghosts of men, they yielded and signed the paper, falsely confessing they were pirates; so that, when the English owners of the 'Trial' claimed their cargo at Madrid, this infamous scrawl was made to justify the capture, though the merchants proved that the 'Trial' had her papers in perfect order, and had taken from the Thames the very hawser, gun, and sail, which she was said to have stolen from the French!

Such facts were not confined to the Midland Sea. In Greek and Sicilian waters England and Spain were held to be at peace; but in the Southern passage and among the Western islands they were not at peace. The Spanish proverb was, 'No peace beyond the line.' In Europe Spain was first; in America she was first and last. She closed her ports

against all nations; she considered a stranger's presence in her waters as a proof of guilt. Such English folk as fell into her power while sailing to Virginia and Guiana, she either sent to rot in Spanish dungeons, hung on the yards, or pitched alive to the contending sharks.

And Spain was not the only power that made piratical warfare on the English trade. A Tuscan ship of six hundred tons, called the 'Livorno,' crowded with guns and men, attacked, off the island of Rhodes, an English bark, called the 'Farm of Plymouth,' two hundred tons. Giles Thornton and a crew of twenty-four men held out against this Tuscan ship for six hours, when the Italian pirates boarded their vessel, shaved their heads, and ironed them to the bench.

Three Livornese vessels chased the 'William and Thomas,' Robert Bradshaw, master, bound with goods and passengers from Egypt to the Golden Horn. A hundred and sixty Turks and Jews had taken passage on board this English craft, with cargoes of silk and drugs, worth half a million crowns. Stout Bradshaw fought the Italian fleet two hours before he struck his flag; and then these Tuscan pirates loaded him with chains, and fettered his companions to the bench. A second

English ship, the 'Triumph,' was descried at sea, and one of these Livornese gave chase. On board this second English ship were twenty Arabs, bound for Algiers. These men the Livornese took out of her first of all, and told the master, Thomas Gardiner, he must hand over with them all the monies they had paid him, since the English had no right to meddle with the carrying trade from port to port. Gardiner paid the money; but his troubles were not ended with this loss. His captors bade him sign a paper saying that most of the goods on board his ship belonged to these Arab passengers; and as he could not sign a lie, they kept him prisoner, beat and starved his crew, and, after buffeting at sea for seventeen weeks, put into Livorno, landed the goods, and sent the crew into a torture-house, until one of their number, maddened by his cracking joints and bleeding flesh, took up a pen and signed. The port authorities at once condemned both freight and ship. At this time Tuscany and England were at peace; but the Grand Duke knew the King and councillors with whom he had to deal A Tuscan agent then in London wrote to tell the Duke that he might safely keep what he had seized; that no great stir would be made about

the loss; that should the Council, pricked on by the City, take the matter up, he knew a way to set things square.

The merchants, fretted by such wrongs, implored King James to grant them letters of marque, so that, while the royal navy was too weak to help them, they might arm and help themselves. If not, they must either cease their trade or put their ships under foreign flags. But James could help them in neither way. Not daring to offend the King of Spain by issuing letters of marque, how could he guard their traffic in such distant waters, while his fleets were rotting in the Thames, his admirals pining in the Tower?

And then broke out a singular and romantic war, in which the fortunes of Eliot and Villiers were at last involved. If pensioners kissed the rod held over them in Florence and Madrid, the country groaned with agony and flushed with anger at such wrongs. Young men of family and fortune heard, at first with shrugs of doubt, and then with burning wrath, such tales as those of the 'Trial' and the 'Triumph.' Beg for letters of marque! They asked for war fleets to be sent — such fleets as swept the 'Twelve Apostles' from

Cadiz Bay; and when they found that nothing would be done by James, they manned their boats and put to sea; put off in sloops, in barks, in rotting hulls — craft weak in rating, poor in speed, but strong in crews and guns, in knowledge of the sea, and, most of all, in passionate hate of Spain. They crossed to Flushing and the Brill, and from the free Dutch ports they took out letters of marque. The foes of Holland were their own; and, under what they held to be lawful letters, dropt down the Spanish coasts, and soon appeared off Belem Castle and in Cadiz Bay. Among the first to rush into this private war were Giffard, Glanville, Ward; and these fine gentlemen were followed by Jennings, Bishop, Harris, and others of gentle blood. In time these Rovers got into safer craft; but they were always of a light and handy sort; mere birds of the ocean, which no Spanish boat could catch and hardly any Spanish gun could hit. In brigantines too light to chase, they hung off Capo da Rocca and San Lucar, picking up vessels at their ease; until, by fresh arrivals from the Dutch and English ports, they felt themselves strong enough to pass into the Straits, spread out to the Canary Isles, and sail into the tracks of the silver fleets.

At the request of Gondomar, these Rovers were recalled, by paper acts at which they only smiled. The King of Spain insisted that his pensioners should force these Rovers to return. Some orders were drawn up and sent; but few, if any, of those daring men obeyed. They were not fighting now to please their King; their letters of marque were signed by Dutch commanders; and while they could not dispute their sovereign's right to call them back, they said these orders to return were Gondomar's orders, not the King's. Instead of sailing for the Downs and piling arms, they pushed into the Straits, where, lying under the rocks of Abyla, they would dart out gaily when some carrack from Peru, some xebec from Palermo, hove in sight, give chase, and bring her to; thus sending home to many hearts in Malaga and Cadiz all the morals of their boast,—'No law beyond the line.'

The ports of Sallee and Larache without, of Tunis and Algiers within, the Straits, were open to these Rovers, who were soon fast friends and teachers to the Moors. Much spoil was brought into these open ports, where amber, spices, pearls, and slaves were sure to meet with

ready sale. As ship after ship fell into the Rovers' hands, the Spaniards wrote more angrily to their pensioners in London; but these Rovers had their friends in court and city; nay, the wiser sort suspected that the aged Nottingham was glad to hear, if only in his secret heart, of deeds being done which brought him back the England of his prime. In Paul's, the citizen chuckled at the Beast being driven to speak of injury, and to beg redress. Of course the King was weak. Too feeble to reply to Gondomar that these English Rovers were but following the example set them by Spanish Admirals, that the letters under which they sailed were lawful, that they took the fruits of their adventures on themselves, he pottered for a time with pensioners and spies, and then proclaimed the Rovers outlaws, treating their letters of marque as void, casting them out of his realm as pirates, and closing against them all his ports.

This act of royal weakness changed the pirate war. Before the days of his proclamation the Free Rovers had been patriots, fighting for their country; now that they were outlawed and their letters cancelled, they were forced to make their choice between standing out against their King or

yielding to the will of Spain. A few came into port and piled their arms; but many of those gallant men stood out. Called pirates where they meant to be patriots, they, with stern, sad faces, took their chances of a Pirate War.

CHAPTER XIV.

EPISODE OF THE PIRATE WAR.

FOREMOST in a band where all were brave was Captain Ward; a man who was called by Nottingham 'Arch-pirate Ward,' by Daborne, the dramatic writer, 'Lord of the Ocean, Terror of Kings, and Conqueror of the Western World.'

John Ward, a gentleman of Faversham, in Kent, was bred to the sea, and was an officer of the Royal Navy, serving on board the 'Lion's Whelp,' in Plymouth Sound, when a notorious recusant, much favoured by those in power, arrived in the western port, where he had made arrangements for escaping into France. Such an escape was lawless; and the man was known to be carrying off with him no less a sum than two thousand pounds in minted gold. To carry coin abroad was then a great offence. Men said it was a shame that people rich enough to bribe should be allowed to break the law. A pinnace came

into the port from France, and Ward got hints that money was being put on board; yet none of the magistrates would move so far as to seize the pinnace and arrest the crew. At length, Ward's soul being vexed, he openly announced that *he* would do his duty, though the heavens should fall upon his head.

A swift, chivalrous man, he raised a crew and hired a boat; and when that pinnace left the port he gave her chase, and coming up with her at sea, boarded her in a moment, and, to his great surprise, found neither the money nor the man on board. A spy on shore had told the fugitive his scheme; a new course had been taken to steal away; and Ward was now at sea, a public officer, with a foreign prize in tow, and nothing to justify his daring act. What could he do? To put back into Plymouth was to court derision, if not worse. The French would certainly complain, the fugitive's friends would harry him, and on the whole, being sick of his idle life, he thought it wiser to apply for letters of marque, and fight the enemy on his own account.

He piped his crew on board the pinnace, offered them their choice of either eating the King's bread and fish, or sharing the chances of a

roving life; and when they answered with a shout, that they would go with him, he swiftly led them to the Spanish coasts.

A bark, a fly-boat, and a cutter fell into his power; and putting such of their crews as feared to join him, for good and ill, on board the French pinnace, to get home as best they could, he entered the Bay of Tunis as a Free Rover, master of three ships of war. He found a friendly welcome from the Dey, who saw what uses could be made of such a fleet. Ward taught his Arabs arts they did not know—the art of cutting square sails, the art of rigging tall ships—and, in return for what he taught and brought them, he was free to have a market for his spoil, with use of all their ports and yards. But though he undertook to serve the Dey in his local wars, he stood out strongly for the condition that he should never be expected to attack a vessel with an English flag.

Ward's path along the deep was swift. Returning to the gulf with his bark and fly-boat, he surprised the 'Madalina' and the 'Little John.' Putting into the 'Madalina' thirty-two guns, into the 'Little John,' twenty-four guns, which he had borrowed from the Moors, he drew to his

flag the most daring cruisers of every port at which he touched—Jew, Arab, English, Greek, and French. He searched the roads of Andalusia, Sicily, and Naples; giving battle with equal fire to the heavy Adriatic galley and the feathery felucca of the Straits. By daring and success he soon enriched himself, while doing the Dey good service and reviving in these midland seas the long-lost echoes of the English name. For many years the courts of Italy and Spain had told each other that the spirit of England lay in the dead queen's grave; but here they found an English spirit not yet laid in a winding-sheet. Diplomatists were not more struck by the Rover's headlong race than by the noble reverence which he bore his country's flag. That flag was sacred in his eyes. Sir Henry Wotton wrote from Venice, 'Ward has seized another Venetian barca, but on the prayer of some English passengers he has taken very little out of her, with more temperance than I thought had been in this kind of men.' But Venice was not charmed by his romantic course; and when the Doge complained of Ward, the Council banished him from the kingdom by a formal writ. The Signiory first heard of this compliance with

their wish from Ward himself. An English ship which sailed into the Lagoon, reported to the Council of Ten that when she was off Otronto she was hailed by a suspicious craft, which proved to be a pirate ship, with Captain Ward on board and a Venetian prize in tow. She gave herself up for lost; but when the pirate found she was English, bound for Venice, he had signalled her to sail. 'Tell the flat-caps,' were his parting words, 'that they have got me exiled; tell them also that before I have done with them they shall sue in London for my pardon.'

From that hour he became to them a sharper plague than any of the Turks. Sea-generals of the Republic scoured the Gulf, and neither caught him nor escaped his toils. Attempts to cut him out of Tunis failed. No name was better known on the Rialto, none more noised about the watersides of Venice, than that of Captain Ward. One ship of fifteen hundred tons—'La Soderina'—freighted in the East with velvets, jewels, silk, and carrying tiers of heavy guns, was cruising up the Gulf when Captain Ward gave chase in the 'Madalina,' of thirty-two guns. The mighty carrack turned on him with scorn; but after a brisk cannonade he

crept under her guns, swarmed up her side, and in a rush of pikes upset her crew, and captured his magnificent prize. The Doge and senators were all concerned in her, for nearly all the Ten had property on board; and many years elapsed before the name of 'La Soderina' disappeared from the Doge's letters of complaint and reclamation to White Hall.

If Ward was troublesome to Venice, he was terrible to Spain. He spoiled her trade; he blocked her ports; he comforted her enemies; he broke up her communications by the sea. His fleet had now become a rival power; for he had more than thirty ships of all rates, strongly manned and well supplied with guns. A group of captains served with him, whom Raleigh might have led; Captain Bishop, Captain Glanville, Captain Harris, and the like; with crews of every country under heaven, although the leaders of these crews were all of English race. Now harassing, and now eluding, great armadoes, Ward and his captains either lurked in the lonely creek, from which they darted on their prey, or massed their strength to fight with the silver fleets. They cut off Cadiz from Carthagena, and made the roads of Malaga unsafe. The Midland water

was no longer a Spanish lake, and the outlet through the Pillars of Hercules was ceasing to be a Spanish strait.

On shore at Tunis, Captain Ward was a bashaw, living in the state of an Arab prince. His palace was of marble, built in the Moorish style, with covered galleries and open courts; alive with colour, shaded by palms, and cooled by rush of waters from hidden jets. His limbs were robed in silk, his waist was bound in shawls. Rich poniards and pistols adorned his belt. A dusky train attended to his wants; an English guard kept watch about his door; his harem was enriched with lovely and dusky slaves.

One day his star seemed suddenly to pale. He was on shore, reposing in his harem, when a Spanish admiral dashed into the harbour, and in fifty minutes set no less than twenty of his ships on fire. His loss was great, for everything he had on board was burnt; his cargoes, stores, and guns, together with his ships as far as the water-line.

The peace between Spain and the United Provinces put an end to the nobler phases of this Pirate war. When peace was signed, the letters of marque expired; the English Rovers were without a flag. Some of these corsairs turned

their prows towards home; and gentlemen, who had lived on corsair decks and sold their captive slaves, met afterwards in their shires as justices of the peace, and sent poor louts to the whipping-post for snaring birds. But more remained at sea, and more went out, refusing to admit the 'paper peace.' On the demand of Philip, James recalled these Rovers, giving up such as refused his summons to the pirate's doom. They knew no country, they possessed no flag. All kings and princes were against them. If they fell into the Spaniard's clutches, they had nothing to expect beyond a speedy sentence and a shameful death. King James announced by proclamation that he closed against them all his English and Irish ports.

It is not much to say that James gave little thought to what might come of closing his ports; he thought of nothing but his hawks, his bottle, and his minion's rosy cheek; but Spain weighed carefully that point; and Gondomar felt certain that this closing of the ports would bring the Rovers back, as *enemies*, to their native coasts.

Giffard, Glanville, Ward, had scornfully repelled the name of pirates launched at them

from Spain. They called themselves Free Rovers, and they claimed to be carrying on the work of Drake. They waged an open war on Spanish and Italian foes; they paid a due respect to friendly powers; and in their direst need, they were not tempted into offering insult to the English flag. In more than one affair, they paid it a chivalric homage. But a brave man values honour more than life; and when these Rovers found that they were outlawed by the feeble puppets at White Hall, they felt an impulse stronger than the love of gain and even the fear of death, to fling defiance at these pensioners of a foreign crown. The Minister of Spain was right; yet it was only after many days, and through increasing acts of shame, that these Free Rovers of the Sea returned in character of pirates to their native shores.

At first these Rovers only changed their policy so far as to drop a line they had always held between Spanish and Italian craft, and craft of other nations entering Spanish and Italian ports. They used to spare all ships except the vessels of their foes; but now they treated these Italian and Spanish ports as closed, and every vessel coming out or going in as prize. Some English

ships soon fell into the Rovers' power, and James had daily cause to rue the signing of that order which had closed the English and Irish ports.

Petitions rained upon him; praying for some protection to a trade thus suddenly exposed to the risks of war, and asking that a fleet of royal ships should be despatched into the Straits. This question struck him like a shot. A squadron in the Straits! Where could he find the ships, the men, the money, and the guns?

But since he would not seek the evil, it came home to him in time, as evil will. When once the Rovers had begun to spoil the English trade in Spanish roads, they asked themselves why they should spare that trade in Irish roads? The ports were closed; the worst was done; and they had time to think of profit and revenge. If Ward refused to put his duty in that light, less scrupulous spirits were inclined to try the shortest way; and when the Arch-pirate, now renewed in strength, sailed outward from the Straits, in order to scour the line from San Lucar to Vigo, Captains Harris and Jennings, running ahead of him, crossed over to the Irish Sea. Captain Halsey, Captain Longcastle, and some others followed, putting into Cork, Kinsale, and Youghal; some few in the

hope of procuring pardon for the past, but more in search of markets for their spoil. They ran to Milford Haven and Plymouth Sound. With heaps of money in their girths, they met no check in buying what they wished to buy, in selling what they wished to sell. The public heart was with them, and a bribe dropped here and there threw clouds of dust into official eyes. Yet fate was hard on some of those gallant men. Harris was taken on the Irish coast; Halsey and Longcastle, after quitting the sea, and settling down on their estates, were seized and thrown into Exeter jail. Jennings, who had landed on the promise of a pardon being granted to him, was tried on the capital charge. These men, with fifteen others, gentlemen of birth and blood, were given to Gondomar, the gibbet, and the chain. Deep interest was excited by their fate. The mayor and citizens of Bristol begged the life of Harris, once a gentleman of that city, offering to pay for him a ransom of eight hundred pounds. The Cornish gentry strove to snatch their neighbours, Halsey and Longcastle, from a felon's death. But all in vain. A row of nineteen gibbets was built near Wapping Stairs; the pirates were brought up to London; on a dark December

morning, long remembered by the City lads, the nineteen Rovers were hung in chains, and left on the river-side for crows to pick and fogs to rot.

These acts of vengeance brought up Ward. Leaving his fleet in the southern seas, he came up northwards, as he said, to purge his fame, to prove that he was not a pirate, and to let his countrymen know the truth. When he came to the English coast he sent a boat on shore, and asked for leave to land. He offered a very large sum in gold as bail; but James, who thought he had got the Pirate in a trap, sent out the 'Rainbow,' one of his finest ships, to bring him in by force. The ships soon met, and Ward, though he was not inclined to fight a man-of-war, would not consent to strike his flag. A crew of five hundred men, a force of fifty brass guns, made the captain of the 'Rainbow' sure of victory, and her second word of parley with the Rover was delivered from her port-holes. 'Shoot ye so!' cried Ward; 'at me, who never fired upon an English ship!' and then he bade his men make play. A gallant fight it was; fought nobly, man to man and gun to gun; but Ward was nimbler with his shot; the 'Rainbow' suffered from his fire; and nothing could have saved her but the

Pirate's sharp command to let her crawl away to port, and keep for better times the honour of her flag. Ward gave no chase; he acted only in his own defence; but having given this answer to the writ of outlawry, he sailed again for Tunis, free from taint of injury to the English trade, of insult to the English coast.

It was his first and only visit to our shores; but that one visit made a deep impression on the public mind. Ben Jonson spoke of Ward in the 'Alchemist,' and Robert Daborne made him the hero of a play. The ballad-mongers trolled his deeds at every fair and harvest-home; and Wotton told the Doge of Venice that if justice were not done to English trade, the King, his master, would let loose upon them a thousand Captain Wards. All London rang with praises of his patriotism, his daring, and his generosity; while gentlemen like Sir John Hampden and Sir Francis Verney sold their lands, bought ships and guns, and put to sea in order to strengthen the Pirate fleets.

In spite of those gibbets near Wapping Stairs, our ports were more and more disturbed by visits from the pirate ships. On every bluff, in every cove, from Land's End to Lundy Isle, they threw up

works of observation and defence. On all those points they found the lairs and castles of Danish jarls, and, once again, the Rovers of the sea became a terror to the land. In Baltimore, Kinsale, and other Irish ports, they found supplies of water, stores, and arms, with ready markets for their spoil of Brazilian sugar and Syrian silk. No government could stop this trade; for every man in Munster was a friend to fellows who could sell him costly goods for a song, and pay him in golden ducats for every horn of powder and every loaf of bread.

Captain Easton and Captain Salkeld, chiefs of these home pirates, built their lair on Lundy Isle, from which they sallied out, while Lord-Warden and Lord Admiral were wrangling as to which should have their ships and goods when they were caught. They swept the Severn of every sail. When a royal proclamation banished them, Salkeld laughingly deposed King James from the sovereignty of Lundy, set up an independent kingdom on his rock, and crowned himself the king. A line of coast, from Milford Haven on his left to Land's End on his right, lay open to his raids; and Salkeld, King of Lundy, exercised his royal rights. When he was short of men, he

crossed to Milford Haven, seized a ship and pressed her crew; when he was short of food, he dropt on shore at Dale, drove out the boors, and killed their beeves and sheep; when he was short of labourers, he brought off herds of peasants to his rock. These captives he employed in building for him a sea-wall on the shore, a castle on the heights.

The hearts of men were so much with these Rovers that the naval officers knew not how to act. Commissioners and Admirals were known to shut their eyes. Sir Richard Hawkins, when Vice-admiral of Devon, was accused of letting them go free; and Nottingham himself was said to be privy to the coming and going of these pirate fleets. A Bristol man brought in a bill to restrain the rovers, and another Bristol man reported against the bill. If no one thought it right for Easton and Salkeld to disturb the English ports, every one heard with rapture of such men as Sir John Hampden, Captain Ward, and Sir Francis Verney, spoiling the fleets and ravaging the coasts of Spain.

This pirate warfare ebbed and flowed as public policy ebbed and flowed. When Spain was calm it sank to nothing, and when Spain was active it rose

again. Each year some old hands dropped away, their fortunes made, their passions spent; but fresh arrivals took their place. Ward munched his dates and smoked his pipe in Tunis; cooling his breath with perfumes, and surrounded in his harem with beautiful captives and obedient slaves. Easton came in with a free pardon and a crowd of sail; for he was wise enough to bribe in quarters where his gold was strong to save. Sir John Hampden fell into the hands of a Spanish cruiser, who condemned him to the chain. Sir John was one of the King's gentlemen pensioners; a fact which puzzled the Spaniards sorely; leading them to suspect the English court of secretly supporting the pirate fleets. Sir Francis Verney, after wild adventures, fell to a Sicilian galley, and was put to the bench and starved to the point of death. At last he told his tale; Sir Robert Chamberlain, our Resident in Naples owned him; and the admiral of Messina, after learning that he was a Christian, ordered his chains to be struck off. But kindness came too late; he tottered to the door of Santa Maria, begged for a wisp of straw, and sank on it and died.

Yet, when the Duke of Lerma spoke of sending

to England a new armada, and Admiral Fajardo proffered his services in a grand attack upon our shores, the young blood of the country leapt into the front, and, as the King could not even then be urged to send a war-ship from the Thames and Portsmouth, patriotic sailors rushed to arms, and on their own account renewed in every sea the Pirate War.

Captain Mannering, the governor of St. Andrew's Castle, threw up his command and put to sea. He quitted the royal service, on pretence of making a voyage to Raleigh's settlement of Guiana. Hiring the bark 'Nightingale,' he fitted her up for a long voyage, got his crew together, and with papers properly signed by the Navy Board, set sail for the south. At first he thought he would only fight the Spaniards beyond the line; but he had hardly passed Cape Spartel ere he opened fire. From that hour he gave up 'the line,' and, lying off the Straits, he snapped up every xebec, galleon, or felucca, he encountered on the Spanish coast. Grave losses fell on the Seville traders, who were loud in their complaints; but Mannering only smiled at their abuse, and bade them seek redress in their courts of law. Yet he was scrupulous as Ward about

the English flag. One story tells the character of the war he waged. He stopped a Lübeck bark and a Calais boat as they were entering Spain, and taking out their cargoes, bade the crews God-speed. Valentine Blake, a Galway shipper, said the goods on board these foreign craft were his, and were consigned to his factor, Lynch, for sale. The pirate sailed into port, requested Lynch to come on board, and finding that these facts were true, gave up his prizes to the farthest mark.

Captain Walsingham equipped six sail with men and guns, and passing through the Bay of Biscay, showed himself under the walls of Belem Castle, and defied Fajardo to come out and fight him on the open sea. Fajardo would not stir; and Walsingham roved up and down the Spanish coast, disturbing all their trade; now pushing up the Duero, now the Tagus, now the Guadalquiver; and making the seas unsafe from Vigo to Trafalgar. He spared the ships, but helped himself to everything on board, from hide and wool to silk and pearl. In six weeks he had taken from his enemy cargoes to the value of five hundred thousand crowns.

All these marauders put to sea as enemies of

Spain; but Calvert's Yorkshire wit suggested that his party might engage some desperate fellows in attacking those who were the enemies of Spain. He lost no time in testing his idea. As the Principal Secretary of State, with pirate pardons in his desk to vend and give, he had the means of tempting poor and reckless men to try their luck; secure of riches if they won, and safe from peril if they failed. One skilful corsair put to sea at once; and Captain Nutt was soon as famous in his line as Captain Ward. His field was in the Northern Seas; his spoils were levied on the French and Dutch.

CHAPTER XV.

PORT AND COURT.

SUCH were the pirates, such the pirate-parties, over whom John Eliot, now Vice-Admiral of Devon, was to keep an eye.

The patent under which he served was narrow, and the duties of his work were ill defined. He held his powers from the Lord-Admiral, not the Crown; and yet a Secretary of State could send down orders which he had no choice but to obey. He had to guard the ports and clear the seas from pirates; yet he was forbidden to risk in that service his ships and crews. He had to curb the most reckless devils in the world; and he was asked to do so without imperilling life or limb. As Buckingham's second self he was to act with a single eye to his patron's gain; and yet he might be called by the Council to a strict account of all that he had done. The interests of a Lord-Admiral were not those of a Secretary

of State. A Lord-Admiral might find his gain in setting aside pardons for which a Secretary of State expected to be paid. More frequently the interests of his chief were not the interests of his country; for the more a pirate was allowed to reive and rob, the more he was likely to yield on capture to the Admiral's share.

Nor was it easy for a Vice-Admiral to tell what seizures it was safe to make. A pirate was a Rover who had no friends. Halsey was a pirate, and his bones were hanging by the water-side; Easton was a hero, thriving in his county as a gentleman should thrive. When Hampden fell into hostile hands, he was reclaimed, while Verney was allowed to die like a forgotten dog. It was safe to arrest Longcastle; was it safe to arrest Captain Nutt? It all depended on the state of parties and opinions in the court. Young Rich, a pirate, was created Earl of Warwick. Captain Mannering came on shore to be dubbed a knight. When Captain Walsingham came on shore he was committed to the Tower.

No one could tell how many peers besides the Earl of Warwick were concerned in such affairs. The late Lord-Admiral was suspected of a leaning towards the Rovers, and the new Lord-Admiral was

said to be coining money at the ports. The Secretaries of state were vending pardons to the right and left; not pardons for the past alone; but papers which, in truth, were licenses to carry on the business of plundering vessels on the seas for a certain time. A common pardon bore a date, to which the crown condoned offences; but the vagabonds who bought such things from needy gentlemen at court, cared nothing for the past. They wanted licenses to reive and rob; they offered very high sums for such a right; and under the pretence of 'grace,' a form of pardon was drawn out which found a ready sale. It bore a date; but added to that date a 'grace' of three months—so that a pirate buying a pardon through his London broker might have time to receive his papers and come on shore. A ruffian, armed with such a 'grace,' could prey upon the ships of all the world for a dozen weeks, return to port, and claim to be secured by law in the possession of his spoil. Such pardons sold for various sums; a hundred pounds, three hundred pounds, five hundred pounds. Every month some drunken pirate, taken in his cups, produced his papers signed by the King's own pen. Not unfrequently a pirate captain, seized on board his deck, pursued the Vice-

Admiral who had taken him in the act of wrong, through the Admiralty courts, and gained high damages in these singular suits; where honest officers of the Crown were fined and ruined for having done their duty against chartered rogues.

In one of these dark passages of official duty Eliot was to bruise his feet and find his wings.

Among the pirates who had put to sea with pardons in their pockets, no man proved so troublesome to the western trade as Captain Nutt. John Nutt, of Limstone, in the county of Devon, was a gunner in those Newfoundland fleets which Calvert sent into the North, to plant his colony of Avalon, in opposition to the colony of Virginia. He had made some trips to Avalon, had risen to the post of captain, and secured the notice of that statesman, ere he listened to the tempter's voice, and ceased to live an honest life.

Calvert's project was a settlement in Newfoundland, with the harbour of St. John's. A band of Catholics went out to found a state, and Nutt was useful to them in their enterprise, not only before, but after, he became a pirate on his

own account. He helped to convoy their ships and goods. He preyed upon the Dutch. In fact, what Calvert was employed in doing on shore, the sailor found he could do at sea—make profit of his policy and merit of his sins. All the Free Rovers then afloat were making war upon the Beast; but Nutt was brought to see, like Calvert, that a partnership with the Beast might pay. The Dutch had ships in every port; these ships the Spaniards would be glad to see him spoil; and Nutt might emulate the deeds of Salkeld, even if he failed to win the fame of Ward. How far the Secretary helped him in the outset may be guessed from what came after; but the leading facts are proved beyond dispute. Calvert gave Nutt his ship; Calvert sent Nutt to Avalon; Calvert armed Nutt with pardons; Calvert received Nutt in London, and renewed his pardon from time to time; Calvert stood by him throughout; and when the pirate fell into the hands of justice, Calvert made that pirate's cause his own.

Arrived in Avalon, Nutt and his comrades stole a French barque and a Plymouth boat, in which they put to sea; and falling in with a Low Country vessel, of two hundred tons, gave chase, and having made a prize of her, ran down the

coast of Newfoundland, and plundered the Dutch and French fishing-smacks. With three good boats, and cargoes of oil and fish—all stolen from the Dutch and French—Nutt rode into Tor Bay, near which he had left his wife and youngsters; put up his fleet in a lonely cove, and built for himself a castle on the rock. He went on shore for drink; he put to sea for prey. Darting from his lair from time to time, he cut off bark and lugger, and enriched his men with spoil. At first he kept his hands off native goods, and treated with respect the royal flag; but prudence left him as he grew in strength and time wore on. All prey was soon regarded as his prize. Loud protests poured upon the boards from Bristol, Dartmouth, Lyme, and all the western towns. But what relief could they obtain? What mayor would act against a man who openly came on shore and showed a pardon signed by James himself? Nutt told the mayor of Dartmouth —timid Thomas Spurway—that he held a Pardon signed by the King, so wide in wording as to cover every crime.

For three years Captain Nutt continued these piratical raids. His friend, the Secretary of State, sent pardons out to him from time to time, drawn

up in a form which was, in effect, a license to plunder ships at sea for ten or twelve weeks. When war broke out between Spain and the United Provinces, it was something new for Spain to have an English pirate acting as a friend of the yellow flag.

It was not easy to prevent his raids—impossible to prevent them by local means. A fleet of light-armed ships were in his pay; his lair could not be scaled from either land or sea; and when he came on shore in Dartmouth, he had such a company at his heels that mayor and portreeve were too glad to let him drink, and trade, and go his way, without shedding human blood. But Nutt had none of the redeeming popularity of Ward. He was no hero of the crowd; no knight in conflict with the Beast; but only a vulgar Ishmael of the sea; and every trader in the western shires was praying night and morning that his cunning brain and stalwart arm might some day meet their match.

No help was to be got from the royal fleet, so long as Calvert was the channel through which the King's orders reached the Navy Board. That fleet was weak, and it had much to do. Some of the best ships were under sail for Spain, in

waiting on the Prince of Wales. The Admiral in the Narrow Seas had seldom more than three or four sail in hand. Our western coasts were bare of ships, and with a war in the Channel it was easy for the Navy Board to give good reasons for retaining four or five sail in the Thames. The fleet still kept her old dislikes and likes; her jealousy of the Papist powers; her favour for the Dutch and Rochellaise; and when the war blazed up anew her heart beat lustily for the ancient cause. Admiral Mervin and Captain St. John held on steadily by that cause; but some of the younger captains, who had risen through Calvert's measures — such as Christian, Geere, and Bingley — were not unwilling to obey their masters, let the service asked of them be what it might. The times were changing fast; the Prince of Wales was courting a Spanish wife; and men, who had been raging at the Beast for years, now feared that, sooner or later, they might have to embrace his cause.

Calvert seized on every chance to vex, remove, and ruin all those officers in the navy who had learned their trade in the former wars. The trip of Buckingham and the Prince of Wales to

Spain enabled him to act with force upon the royal fleet; to worry Admiral Mervin in the Downs; to fling Vice-Admiral Eliot into prison; and to rouse that sleeping lion into active rage.

CHAPTER XVI.

A NEW ROMANZO.

'SWEET boys and dear adventurous knights, worthy to be put in a new romanzo!' sighed the King, on reading letters from Steenie and Baby Charles, now playing what he called 'heroic' parts. Each line from them perplexed him with fear and joy—with fear lest they should come to him no more; with joy that in their coming they would crown him with his heart's desire.

Ten months had passed in silence ere a single soul was told of that great pledge which Gondomar on quitting London had conveyed to Spain. The young men would not trust the King; for James, they thought, would fret and fume; their secret would be blown about; and they had wit enough to know that if their purpose were disclosed, the shires would rise to stay them and the fleets to bring them back. No word was breathed until they got their cue from Spain; but when

the Condé made a sign for them to come, they rushed into the King's apartments, barred the door, and made the old man swear an oath that he would keep their secret. Then they told him all. The King sat dumb with wonder. Charles, and George too, going in person to Madrid! He felt that this was not the way. The boys were mad, and they would ruin themselves and him. To set their feet in Spain would be to yield the game, and take such terms as Philip should impose on them. The Prince might go to fetch his bride, as he himself had fetched his Queen from a Danish port; but he should wait until the terms were fixed, the contracts signed, and then go out in royal state. The youngsters told him they would not wait. But how, asked James, could they get to Spain? The sea was covered with Dunkerque pirates, English rovers, Netherland fleets. By land? The French would never let them pass. Richelieu was sore against the match. The young men answered him with pouts and jests. They could not tarry for royal ships; they would not ask for a pass through France. In wig and beard, in rough attire, and calling each other Tom and John — Tom Smith, John Smith — they would slip away unseen, would cross the Straits, would

drive through Paris, and would hail the Bidassoa ere the keenest eyes had missed them from the galleries of White Hall.

The King gave way before them, for his strength was spent; but, tossing on his bed all night, he saw as in a vision darkly some of the perils they were soon to face,—the risk of French deceit, of Spanish treachery, of English rage. His planets were not ruled by Dr. Lamb; he felt a chill upon his heart; and, though he could not yet foresee the assassin's knife and headsman's axe, which were to end this wild romance, he rose from his couch in terror, sent for the youths, and, trying to be king and lord once more, he begged them to release him from a promise which he could not keep. But Charles was cold and George was rude. When he had given his word, said Charles, he should abide by it; and if his Majesty drew back, he (Charles) would live a bachelor all his life. 'Some knave,' cried Buckingham, 'has done this thing.' But how could knave have known their plans, unless the King had blabbed? Some one had given his master foul advice; but let the busy knave beware! These threats, so thinly veiled, alarmed the King still more; for James had latterly been dreaming that

his young comédian would some day kill him in his rage. 'Look,' roared Buckingham to his face, 'if you go back now, no man will ever trust you in the time to come.' Cowed, broken, and ashamed, the dotard shut his eyes and let them go.

'I must change caps with your Majesty,' said Archie, the court-jester. 'Why?' asked James, in misery. 'Why?' laughed the merry-andrew,—'who sent the Prince into Spain?' 'Suppose the Prince should come safely back?' put in the King. Then Archie shook his sides. 'In that case I will send my cap and bells to the King of Spain.'

Before the madcaps left, the pupil of Dr. Lamb took steps to trim and balance his affairs. Young Monson was dubbed a knight, and sent abroad. The fleet was given to Rutland, as a Catholic peer and friend of Spain; but then Sir Henry Mervin and Sir William St. John, bluff old sailors who were known to like the Dutch and Rochellaise, were left in the Narrow Seas. Lord Say and Sele was set at large. Phelips and Coke had been already freed from the Tower; and Pym had been suffered to go down to his country-house. Sir Edward Conway, friend of Huguenot and Reformer, was appointed to the post of Second Secretary of State, to balance Calvert, who was

bent on serving Rome and Spain. To screen their journey, ships were ordered to get ready for sea, and folk were told that Buckingham was to fetch the Infanta home, and that the Prince of Wales would sail in the 'Royal Charles' to greet his bride as she set foot on board an English deck. Not only were the pages and hangers-on deceived, but veteran councillors and secretaries of state.

Taking leave of the King at Royston, saying they would join him in a week at Newmarket, the grave young Prince and the light Comedian rode to Newhall, one of Buckingham's country-houses, where his man, Dick Grimes, was waiting for them with three strong horses, pistols, hoods, and wigs. The young men changed their coats, drew on their hoods, stuck pistols in their belts, encased their chins in beards, tied ropes of pearls about their waists, secreted emeralds and diamonds of price about their clothes, and, calling each other Tom and Jack, set out from Newhall with no other servant in their wake than Grimes.

They dashed across the Essex fields to Tilbury, hailed the ferry-boat, and passed the river into Kent. Too light of heart and young in

years to play such parts, they ran much risk at every turn. In crossing over from the fort, they bade the waterman land them below the town, instead of at the usual pier. He stared at them, and put his helm about. In jumping on the shingle, one of them dropped his beard. The ferryman saw that here were young men travelling in disguise. On mounting, they threw down a piece of gold, and galloped off without requiring change. Supposing they were duellists going into France to fight, the boatman ran to a justice of the peace, and told what he had seen and heard. As justices of the peace in Kent had recently been warned to stop all persons crossing into France without a license, this Gravesend justice sent a postboy after them towards Rochester, with orders to arrest them in their flight. The chase was now begun. But Grimes had chosen his horses well; the runaways outsped the postboy; and had baited and left the inn at Rochester before the messenger of justice crossed the bridge. Below the town, on the great Kent road, they met a royal party bringing up the Flemish ambassador, with Sir Lewis Lewkenor, master of the ceremonies, and Sir Henry Mannering, once a Rover, now

Lieutenant of Dover Castle, in command. What could they do? Lewkenor would know them, and their secret would be blown about. It would be better to avoid him. But the royal party was upon them; and they saw, from certain movements of the guard, that they had been observed. To loose their reins and dash across the country was their only chance; so, putting on a spurt, they leapt the hedge and tore away through ditch and field. The royal party halted, stared, and parleyed. Yon three riders were afraid to meet them. Why? They must have been concerned in some great crime. What crime? Just then the crime on everybody's tongue was an attempt on the Prince of Orange. That crime had been traced to the Barneveldts; these Barneveldts had fled from Holland; and some folk said they were hid in Kent. Who could yon riders, flying from the King's officers, be, except the criminals? They must be followed. They would make for Canterbury, and in crossing country they were losing time. A trooper, riding hard and straight, could reach that city and its mayor before them; so a line was written, and a trooper was sent back to Canterbury, with that line of warning to the mayor.

Dragging through up-turned soil in winter months is tiring to the best of steeds; and as the madcaps came near Sittingbourne one of their horses reeled and fell. The post-boy came upon them in their plight; and as the Prince would not give up his name, they had to go with him and answer to the mayor. 'Well, who are you?' asked that officer. Buckingham pulled off his wig and told the mayor his name. He was going to Dover on a visit to the fleet; he pointed to the Prince as one of his friends; and spoke of Grimes as one of the officers of his staff. His visit was a secret, and he told his worship he must hold his tongue.

At Dover they were stopped again, although Endymion Porter and Sir Edward Cottington were waiting for them in the harbour with a ship. A whisper to the deputy in command put things to rights, but that small whisper let their secret out. Early in the morning all the five set sail.

Both Prince and Marquis lay in their cabins, sick, for seven or eight long hours. They landed at Boulogne, and passing by the names of Tom and John Smith, hired horses at the yards, and rode away towards Montreueil, where they

arrived that night. In two days more they got to Paris; rested one day in that city, where the Prince of Wales first saw his future queen; and then, without a hint of their rank being blown about, the five adventurers pushed for the south of France, and when they crossed the Bidassoa, danced and flung up caps in headlong rush of animal delight.

The older men were soon knocked up; but neither Charles nor Villiers reined his horse. Porter and Cottington knew the roads, the people and the dialects; but the madcaps would not wait for their slower pace. Away they tore in front, their horses foaming at the mouth, their laughter ringing in the air; now leaving their companions in the rear, to catch them up at the nearest inn, and then to be left behind once more, until the trail was fairly lost. The Prince and Marquis rode alone, through provinces of which they neither knew the roads nor understood the speech. At length they grew so hot and eager that they would not pause to eat and sleep, but tore along all day and night, until they dashed one evening as the bells were tolling eight, into the court of Digby's house. 'My lord, my lord!' they cried. A troop of serv-

ing men were soon about. Who were these strangers come in such a plight? Tom Smith and John Smith, they replied. They wished to see my lord. When Digby came—a proud, polite old man, as formal as a grandee of the Spanish court—he was amazed to find, in that unseemly garb, without a servant to attend them, and without a word of warning to himself, my lord of Buckingham and the Prince of Wales.

They had ridden hard to ruin; and if either of these hapless youths had been as quick of sight as he was hot of will, he would have read his sentence in that startled and experienced face.

CHAPTER XVII.

MOVE AND COUNTER-MOVE.

When Calvert found the Prince was gone, he felt the time had come for him to act. If all went well, the Infanta, his future queen, would be on English soil in May; and it was time that he should read a lesson to the enemies of Rome and Spain.

His first care was to purge the fleet. In Buckingham's absence, Rutland, as a Catholic peer, was named to the chief command. Mervin and St. John held the Narrow Seas; and Calvert knew that these old sailors gave their hearts and help to Calvinist and Huguenot — that news of their dismissal would be welcome in Madrid.

Rochelle was now become to England what Ostend had been some twenty years before; the rampart and the refuge of her faith beyond the seas. A great contention had been going on; great victories had been won; and France at one

time looked as though she might have shed her Celtic and Latin nature, and resumed her place as head of those Franks from whom she had derived her name. The Huguenots marched on Paris, and were strong enough to seat their hero on the throne; but after Henri's death, that hero's son forgot the high traditions of his house; and sent his fleets and armies to destroy the city which had been their best support. Rochelle had fallen to superior force; but fallen nobly and with honourable terms. She was to keep her ancient rights. She was to hold her popular creed. She was not expected to admit a royal garrison. Fort St. Louis, built against her, was to be destroyed. Not one of these honourable terms was kept with her; for Louis had been taught by the Duke of Guise that heretics stood beyond the pale of law. Again the citizens flew to arms; a town against a kingdom; and they stretched out hands for help in need. The Duke de Rohan put himself at their head; his brother, the celebrated Admiral de Soubise, came over as ambassador, to plead their cause.

All London greeted this great admiral; the pulpits teemed with sermons for the Rochellaise; but how could councillors pledged to a Spanish

match assist the Rochellaise? James satisfied his conscience by a grant of three thousand pounds, with a guard of honour for the Rochellaise Admiral on his homeward voyage. This guard consisted of the 'Adventure' and the 'Garland,' in command of Admiral Mervin and Captain St. John.

The man-of-war in which the French Admiral sailed was part of the Rochellaise fleet, and as the Huguenot town was then at war with France and Spain, he chased and overtook a ship with Spanish goods on board, but bound to a port in France. Not much was said of an affair the like of which was happening every week; but Calvert made a note of this event; and when his time was come for showing zeal, he took occasion of a protest made by French and Spanish agents to declare his own opinion, as the senior Secretary of State, that Mervin and St. John had fallen short of their duty in allowing the Rochelle Admiral to chase that ship. These captains justified themselves. They could not interfere in such a strife. They had no means of hindering the Rochellaise from seizing a Spanish boat except by firing into her. They could not fire into the vessel of a friendly power; and this particular vessel

had an ambassador of that friendly power on board. All these things Calvert knew; but then he also knew that men in Paris and Madrid would learn with rapture that Sir Henry Mervin was no longer Admiral of the Narrow Seas. Calling Mervin and St. John before the Navy Board, in which he had much weight, he put them out of commission, and told them they must answer to the Council for their deeds. Captain Thomas Best was named to the 'Garland,' instead of St. John; Sir Richard Bingley to the 'Adventure' instead of Mervin. Bingley was to act as Admiral in the Narrow Seas.

One week after the Prince of Wales left Dover, Calvert sent a pardon to the pirate Nutt, who was at sea; a pardon which was nothing but a license signed by James to carry on his piracies for the next three months.

By happy luck the second Secretary, Sir Edward Conway, once a soldier in the Low Countries, afterwards an ambassador in Germany, was of other politics than Calvert; and his office near the King enabled him to cross the actions of his personal rival and political foe. When his Majesty left London for the country, Conway rode with him, as his confidential man, while Calvert stayed

in London to discharge the routine duties of his post. In going progress, James received letters from his ports and towns in blame of Nutt; and Conway, close at hand, seized every moment to support this cry for justice from the towns. 'Send out a ship,' said Conway, 'from the Downs; the Garland would do the work; but let the captain have instructions to pursue the pirate, fight him at any risk, and either bring him in as prize or burn him to the water's edge.' James heard these words; but Calvert found some means of thwarting him at the Navy Board by raising questions of a practical sort. Nutt's flag was flying from a nimble ship, well manned, and carrying twenty guns. What vessel in the Downs could be sure of catching her and also beating her when caught? The chase, too, might be long; for Nutt could either slip into the Irish Sea, and passing round the northern coast, run over to St. John's or drop into the Spanish main. In each he would be safe. The King was timid. Conway sent some hints to the fleet; and Thomas Best, a fine old sailor, offered to go out in the Garland after Nutt, and pledged his word to bring that pirate into port within a month. The King was overjoyed. But then,

what force, his Majesty wished to know, would guard the Downs when Best was gone in chase of Nutt? No force that could be trusted, said the Navy Board; the Garland being the only ship in the Downs then fit for sea. The King was in despair.

A Dutch fleet off Dunkirk, a Prince of Wales in Spain, a war of races and religions on the Rhine, a secret treaty in Madrid, and naval actions daily fought in English waters; such was the state of things his Majesty had to face. How could he send his only war-ship from the Thames? On that side Calvert felt that Nutt was safe.

If anything was to be done against Calvert's man, the means of doing it must be sought in guile, and not in force; and Conway, while he sounded Bingley, Mervin's successor in the Downs, was also hinting to King James that Nutt might perhaps be tempted to come on shore, and, being an outlaw, could be seized the moment he set foot on land. The King was pleased; his kingcraft being excited by the hope of cheating even so small a rogue as Captain Nutt; but then the question rose of where they could find a man with nerve and brain for such a piece of work?

Eliot was an officer to whom they would look for help in what they meant to do. This Nutt was known to be a desperate fellow, served by gangs as desperate as himself; a man not easy to deceive by words; a man who would be sure to strike out madly when he found that any one was playing him false. But Conway soon perceived that Eliot was the man he wanted. Conway sounded Eliot ere he sent to him a public letter, signed as Secretary of State; but, when he had felt his ground, he wrote to Eliot from the court at Oatlands Park a public letter, not in open phrase, which might commit the King too far with Calvert and the friends of Spain, yet plainly hinting what his Majesty would have him do as an acceptable service to his country, if the wit and daring could be found for such a task. This Nutt, he said, was guilty of piratical acts; the towns and ports were all alarmed by him; the coasting trade was almost killed; and stain was cast upon the royal fleets. He ought to be arrested as he came on shore. To take him, Eliot would have to act with caution; to conceal his purposes; to set a watch upon the pirate's haunts; to note the times he left his ship, the men he spoke with, and the inn at which he drank; but in his public orders he was not to

point at Nutt by name. In brief, he was to use his perfect knowledge of time and place, so that his Majesty's pleasure might be swiftly done. To let him see how much depended on his zeal, he was to send, when he had things of moment to report, directly to the King himself.

But Conway kept one secret back from Eliot which he should have known,—the fact that Captain Nutt was acting under warm protection of a rival Secretary of State.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PIRATE AND PRISON.

In ignorance of the powers he would offend by zeal in such a cause, Eliot was working to effect the King's desire, with art so dark and deed so prompt as proved that Conway had been guided by unerring instinct in his choice of means.

For some weeks past the pirate had been busy in his craft; busier than usual; for the rogue was thinking of a change of life. His latest Pardon had expired by flux of time, and, ere he stopt his trade of piracy, he wished to add some thousands to his hoards. Returning from St. John's, where he was beating off the Dutch and French and lending Calvert's colony much aid, he fell to plundering friend and foe, and cries came up from all the western towns for help. In one week Nutt made spoil of a dozen ships.

What could be done against the pirate? Eliot had no choice of means. He could not follow

Nutt to sea; he had no vessel strong enough to fight him; and if fortune threw in his way some golden chance, he had no right to peril life and limb. What then? A trap might be laid. A gloss might be put upon a writing which the man who made it knew it would not bear; a promise might be given which the man who gave it knew he could not keep. In such a way the pirate might be caught. It was a dirty end, and all the means of reaching it were base; but Eliot, in this early stage, was an executive officer, and no more. He knew no fear, and felt no qualms. This pirate was a wretch beyond the pale of law, and Eliot had not learned from personal trials to respect those higher morals which are not included in the forms of law.

By chance, the latest Pardon sent by Calvert to the pirate fell into Eliot's hands. It bore the date of February 1st, 1623, and gave the pirate three months' grace. It had the signature of James. Eliot observed that paper well. It was a full pardon to Captain John Nutt for acts of piracy committed on the high seas before the 1st of May. That day of grace was past; and Eliot, sitting as a judge, was sure that such a pardon could not be received in either his own, or any

other court of law. But Nutt was not a jurist, and the question was, whether men who knew that it was worthless, could be got to lead him into thinking that the document was good. If so, he might be tempted to come on shore. No little lying would be needed in the plot; but with this needful lying there was every chance that Nutt would fall into his trap.

Eliot undertook this task. When he had formed his plans, he sent his deputy, Richard Randal, to the pirate's lair to parley. Nutt was to be tricked from first to last. Randal was to make him think his visit was for private gain. He was to give Nutt some hints that Eliot was a man who might be bought. He was to sound the pirate on his wish to land; and if he saw him eager to come in, he was to let him know that Eliot held a Pardon in his hands, which might be purchased from the Vice-Admiral at a certain price. Randal did his work right well, and Nutt sent word to Eliot, in reply, that he would pay three hundred pounds for the Pardon, and would come on shore to treat, if Eliot would only pledge his word that he was free to come and go. Eliot took horse at once, and rode from Plymouth to Tor Bay, in hope that Nutt would

instantly come on shore; but something was amiss on the pirate deck, and Nutt sent word to the Vice-Admiral that though he wished to treat, his crew were much excited, and they hindered him from coming on shore by force.

The fact was true. The crew were flushed by a piece of luck, and they were much afraid that if their captain went on shore and saw Sir John their spoil would be taken from them. Randal told them that the Pardon held by Nutt was good to the date of his message; but this piece of luck had fallen upon them after he was gone. A vessel coming home from the West Indies, laden with dyes and sugars, four or five thousand pounds in value, called the 'Edward and John,' the property of John Eldred and others of Colchester, was overtaken as she sailed up Channel, six or seven miles from Dartmouth, seized by the pirate crew, made prize, and carried to Tor Bay, where she was safely moored below the pirate fort. They were engaged in searching her hold when Eliot's messengers came on board. No Pardon, as they knew, could give them this great haul,—an English bark, well stored with English goods—and therefore they were stiff against their captain going on shore and giving up their prize.

Sir John, in ignorance of the causes of this change, resolved to go on board the pirate ship, and brave the gangs who held their captain under guard. Calling a wherry, he pushed into the bay, and coming alongside the corsair, took the hearts of all that reckless crew by jovial bearing, and by showing himself unarmed. But he was now surrounded by jealous eyes, and every word he spoke was weighed and scanned. His first remark was careless, and it taught him to beware. On seeing the 'Edward and John' in tow, and learning what she was, and when she had been taken, he announced, as such an officer was bound to do, that she must be restored. But Nutt, now closely watched by his men, stormed up at once. They could not, and they would not, yield their prize. Pardon or no Pardon, they would keep what they had captured. Eliot said no more; for why raise such small questions on the pirate deck? His purpose was to snare them all, both crew and captain, goods and ship. When he had got the pirates in his power, he would not ask their leave to deal with the captured bark. Resuming his jovial tone, he passed into Nutt's cabin, where he found a flask of wine, a bundle of papers, and a willing ear. Two hours were spent in drinking,

jawing, and accepting terms. The door was left ajar, for every man on board to hear; since every man on board put life and goods on what was said and done. A crowd of swart and fiery faces pressed upon the open door; with bare and brawny arms uplifting poniard, musket, marlin-spike and brand, Eliot had to satisfy Nutt that the false Pardon was a good one; and, as Eliot was a judge in the local court, it was not easy for Nutt to dispute his word on such a point. When Nutt was satisfied that the Pardon held by Eliot was a thing to trust, he offered to buy it. Feeling that the more he appeared to stand on money, the less he would be suspected by a man like Nutt, Sir John advanced his price. Instead of three hundred pounds, he asked for five. To blind the folk in port, it was arranged that Eliot should 'seize' the ship and bark, and take some portion of the captured goods on shore. While Eliot and Nutt were drinking in the cabin, the purser of the 'Edward and John' came to the door, and pushing through the pirates, fell on his knees, entreating the Vice-Admiral to give him back his ship and cargo; but Eliot, now hob-nobbing with the pirate in pretended friendship, would not listen to a word.

Yet, when his jovial visitor was gone, Nutt's mind was racked with doubts. The crew suspected Eliot; for a rogue is said to know all other rogues by sight; and Eliot's handsome face and dauntless mien were not the face and mien of traffickers in private Pardons and in plundered goods. They would not let their captain land. Would Eliot come on board once more? No; Eliot could not spare the time; but he assured the captain he had nothing now to fear. The pirate, easier in his mind, then left his ship and came on shore. Eliot was ready for him, and the instant Nutt set foot on land, he was a prisoner to the law. Nutt raged and stormed; but Eliot, laughing at his anger, locked him fast in jail. Quick work was made with the pirate ship; her sails were brought on shore; a guard was placed on deck; and her unruly crew was sent into the prison-yards.

The King was so much pleased, that this affair seemed likely to be the opening of Eliot's fortune, not the prelude to his fall. Conway wrote to Eliot, thanking him for his zeal, directing him to place the pirate ship in safety, see that the goods were not dispersed, and send up Nutt himself to be examined by the Lords. He

hinted that the King might like a personal hearing of the tale, and he could promise that Eliot should be admitted to the honour of kissing hands.

Eliot obeyed these orders, and prepared to wait upon the King. Besides the honour of kissing hands, he was likely to make from the transaction four or five hundred pounds in money; but in sending Nutt to London, he was putting all his business into Calvert's hands!

Conway was with the court at Wanstead, Calvert with the Council at White Hall; and, as the Lords knew little, and Calvert much, about this pirate and his doings, it was not hard for Calvert in so slight a business to mislead and cross the King.

Nutt came to London in a fury. Having hoards of money, he had also troops of friends; and when he stood before the Council, it was not so much to answer for his crimes at sea, as to complain about his wrongs against the Vice-admiral. Ensnared by trick, arrested by surprise, and robbed of both his ship and prize, he thought he was fighting Eliot with his own bad weapons—impudence and falsehood—when he told the Lords that the Vice-Admiral of Devon had set him on, and was

to share his spoil! Randal, he declared, had come to him in Eliot's name and offered him a Pardon for five hundred pounds. He answered Randal he had no such ready sum. Then Eliot sent him word that he must have his price in either meal or malt, and that the pirate crew must find the money where they could. Nutt swore he was unwilling to take the Vice-Admiral's hints; for he was sick of piracy, and longed to yield himself to the King and live at peace. But Eliot pricked him on; not only sending his man to say, but also taking his pen to write, that the roadstead of Tor Bay was not a place to pick up funds, and that he should put off to sea. He further swore that Randal came to him one day, and, telling him of some ships then lying in Dartmouth port with Spanish goods and coin on board, suggested that if he would snatch a prize from the Spaniards, the Vice-Admiral would see him through with it and share his prize. Eight or nine days after Randal's visit, he had fallen upon the 'Edward and John,' and taken her to raise the sum which Eliot's deputy had fixed.

Such was the story told by Nutt in Calvert's presence at the Council; but the Yorkshire Secretary had too much sense to dream that such a tale

would serve him as the ground for an arrest of Eliot. He must think of Conway and the King. If Eliot were in jail, no bruit would be too wild to raise against him; but he was not in jail, as yet; and no man in his senses would receive as evidence against a naval officer in high command Nutt's story of the Spanish coin and goods.

How then was Calvert to entrap Sir John? The Secretary of State was seldom at a loss, and the Vice-Admiral of Devon was not long at large.

John Eldred, one of the three partners in the 'Edward and John,' was seeking to regain his ship and cargo, stolen by the pirate; and his case was now before Sir Henry Marten, judge of the Admiralty Court.

This Marten was an old and feeble man; not one who would sell his soul for so much dross paid down; yet one who could shape his course on the bench with close regard to his private ends. Inclined to do his duty, he was more inclined to keep his place. In order to keep his place, he had to live in peace with Secretaries of State. The arts by which fat posts are kept in venal courts were not unknown to him; and like his betters, he could watch for looks and nods, and act upon the

secrets of a smile. Marten had two strange masters now to serve. So far as he had politics at all, he was a popular man. When he succeeded Dunne in the Court of Admiralty, Gondomar objected to him as an enemy of Spain; and in his office he was branded by that Spanish minister as a judge disposed to act with fairness by the Dutch. Yet he was careful not to break with Calvert and the Catholic party, now so strong at court. No man knew better than Marten when he might speak his mind, and when he must hold his tongue. He would not say the thing that was not true; yet he could close his lips when silence had in him the perfidy of a lie.

Calvert could count on Marten to restore the ship and goods to Eldred, and to frame his order of restoring them in any form that a Secretary might supply. Here lay a chance of tripping up Sir John. A judge's order would, in ordinary cases, run to the Vice-Admiral of the shire in which the ship and cargo lay, and that great officer would be authorized to hand them over to their owners, as determined by the court. Suppose this usual course were set aside? Suppose the judge's order were addressed to other parties; say, to Mr. Spurway, mayor of Dartmouth, and

the local judge of Eliot's court? Suppose these officers were empowered to call upon the Vice-Admiral to yield the property in his hands to them? An order so conceived would have the effect of superseding Eliot in one of the highest functions of his place. What then? The Vice-Admiral would feel insulted in his office; and, being a man of spirit, he was likely to resist. If so, he might be called before the Council for resisting lawful warrants, and lodged in jail ere Conway, and the King, much pressed with great affairs, could interpose. If Eliot could be lodged in jail, as one disgraced and ruined, every one who owed him grudge would eagerly begin to wag his tongue, and in a week he would be guilty of a list of crimes.

Marten's order was accordingly addressed to Spurway and two local officers, charging them to proceed against Sir John Eliot, and compel him to restore the prize!

Eliot was more amused than hurt. He had no inkling of the actual facts; and, when he read the paper brought to him by the Mayor of Dartmouth, he thrust it into his pocket, and strode away, no doubt with gestures of contempt. When Spurway pressed his orders, Eliot only

stormed. He saw that some one—name unknown—was putting shame upon him. He believed that he was strong, not only in his rights of office, but in Conway's friendship, and the King's goodwill. He had just been thanked for what he had done by a Secretary of State, and called to special audience of the King. As quick as he was proud, he told the Mayor of Dartmouth that he would not yield his prize until the proper time—until the piracy was proved, and Nutt had been condemned.

Calvert laid his version of these facts before the Council, and a summons for the Vice-Admiral to appear and answer for himself was quickly signed. Not knowing he had given offence (for his refusal to yield the ships and goods, on an informal order of the judge, could surely not be pressed against him!), Eliot rode up to London, thinking he had only to appear at court, explain his meaning, and receive the royal thanks. But he was soon deceived. The Secretary of State, by exercise of arbitrary power, arrested him the moment he arrived in town, and sent him under guard to curb his hasty temper in the Marshalsea—the common pirate jail!

This arrest was Eliot's first sad trial of the

law which gave an officer of state the power to seize a free-born citizen at will:—a trial out of which great fruits were soon to spring.

The Marshalsea was then the household prison of the court. A grim old place so long ago as the times of John of Gaunt, this prison stood in High Street, Southwark, near the stews, the theatres, and the Clink. The men confined within its walls and liberties were lodged there, not on information sworn before a justice of the peace, but by a personal warrant signed by either an officer of the royal household or a Secretary of State. Known as the 'King's Prisoners,' these offenders were a motley crew; poets, pirates, parsons, plotters; coiners, libellers, defaulters, Jesuits; vagabonds of every class who vexed the souls of men in power, and yet whom men in power might fear to bring before a court of law. A page, a waiting-woman, or a pimp, could find the means of laying an enemy in this royal ward. A man so laid by the heels might linger in his prison-yard for years. Not long ere Eliot came to High Street, Field the actor, Massinger and Daborne the poets, had been here for 'unknown causes.' David Sampson had been here on a doubt of his having fired the banqueting-

house; Captain Brett, for taking young Smythe abroad with a false pass; Lady Blount, for troubling the Council about her wrongs; Robert Thompson, for saying the Spanish fleet was coming to these islands; Christopher Brooke, the poet, for his share in the marriage of Dr. Donne. Robert Garret, mayor of Dover, had been lodged in the Marshalsea for not detaining a French ship; Robert Preston, for confessing women and performing mass; John Bailey, for neglecting to get in a benevolence; George Withers, the poet, for writing his 'Abuses Stript and Whipt;' Dr. Everard, Rector of St. Martin's, for a sermon in his church; all, with the exception, perhaps, of Father Preston, victims like Eliot of this power of arbitrary arrest.

One of the men whom Eliot found in this pirate prison was Mervin, lately Admiral of the Narrow Seas. Not satisfied with driving Mervin and St. John from the fleet, and placing officers more ductile on their quarter-decks, Calvert was toiling to degrade them in the public eye. He hoped to do so by a criminal charge. This patron of the pirate Nutt was bold enough to allege against these eminent captains a piratical act! The French and Spanish agents played into

his hands. These foreign agents knew that Admiral de Soubise, their enemy, was engaged in making war upon their trade. They chose to call his actions those of a pirate; and they ventured to assert that Admiral Mervin and Captain St. John were guilty of a share in his piratical acts, because they had not fired into a friendly ship with an ambassador on board. On this pretence an English Admiral had been flung by Calvert into the pirate jail.

In every yard of the Marshalsea prison Eliot found these fruits of the power of making arbitrary arrests.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN THE MARSHALSEA.

ELIOT was slow to feel the anger which such wrongs as his seemed but too likely to arouse. As yet he could not see the measure of these wrongs; for much was hidden from his eyes; he still regarded his arrest as either a mistake of person or abuse of form, to end in laughter and apologies, like a tavern jest. Such accidents were common in a time of war. The full iniquity of his treatment only dawned upon him when he saw the results of Calvert's scheme.

The charge on which he was sent to the Marshalsea—that of disobeying a lawful warrant—was not proved. Eliot could have raised the point of form, and showed that his resistance to the Mayor was not resistance to the King. A knotty rule of law would then have come before the courts; but Calvert had no wish to try this point of form. He pressed at once the charges made by Nutt. If Marten could be got to see

with Calvert's eyes, another friend of Holland would be ruined and removed from high command. Eliot, Vice-Admiral of Devon—like his comrade Mervin, Admiral of the Narrow Seas—would be left to rot in a pirate jail.

Sending for Marten to his office, Calvert laid before that timid judge the story told by Captain Nutt. He laid much stress on the rank of Captain Nutt; and bade him call both Captain Nutt and Sir John Eliot, try them with questions, and report to him upon their case. Marten called these parties up: first, Captain Nutt; then Randal, Eliot's officer; and last of all, Sir John himself. Nutt's case broke down at once. Not one of his charges was sustained by proof; the most important points were negatived by his own admissions; and the witnesses called by Eliot gave the lie direct to every word. The judge was not in doubt what he should say: but then he saw that Calvert wanted a report condemning Eliot—not a report condemning Nutt. He could not in his conscience say that Nutt was right. He dared not tell the Secretary of State that Nutt was wrong. He hoped to run between these rocks by sending in a summary of the evidence, but without expressing an opinion of his own.

Poor Marten was uneasy in his mind. The King was wont to send him, once a-year, a brace of bucks; but this year they had failed to come; and Marten could not sleep for fear lest James was turning from him that royal face. What had he done—what had he left undone?

Yet Eliot, far from firing up about the rights of man, so grossly outraged in his person, and in that of his comrade, Admiral Mervin—not to speak of the smaller fry—was thinking only of his master's loss. Annoyed he was; but his annoyance took a practical, not a legal turn. Of his unjust arrest he said but little; but he sent for Tom Aylesbury, whom he knew as the Lord Admiral's clerk, and put the case to him as a man of business, whether his lord's affairs could prosper in the western country while his principal officers were kept in jail? Tom Aylesbury saw it; and as Buckingham's clerks were greater men than Secretaries of State, Tom wrote to Conway, calling on him, as he valued his lord's good will, to interfere at once;—not dwelling on the fact of Eliot's unjust arrest (for what was a breach of law to Tom?), but stating sharply that his master would be vexed, if through these brabbles he should suffer in the western ports. Thus

pressed by Aylesbury, Conway wrote to Marten; more important still, Tom Aylesbury went and roused that judge himself. That judge now saw things in a clearer light; for Eliot was not only right in law, but he was Aylesbury's friend and Buckingham's man. Conway was with him, too, and Conway was in personal waiting on the King. Poor Marten saw it all. In trying to please one Secretary, he had piqued the other; and his brace of bucks had not arrived! His fault was great—and dead against his conscience too; but now he saw his error, and would speedily set things right.

Eliot—he wrote to Conway—should be freed at once. What Nutt had urged was not made out by proof. The facts alleged were all denied, and these denials were supported by the witnesses on oath. Much more he might set down, if it were useful to state the case at length. His mind was clear about the justice of setting Eliot free. Each hour that he remained in jail his Majesty and the Lord Admiral must suffer loss. The pirate crew — of whom twenty-three were lying in Dartmouth jail—could not be tried for their offence until the Vice-Admiral of the shire could take his seat in court. No seizure could be made of wrecks and pirates save by officers

acting in Eliot's name. The case was clear, and Eliot ought to be enlarged.

But Calvert was not likely to throw up his game. He dared not openly defy Tom Aylesbury; but the great man's clerk was not so well acquainted as himself with what was passing in Madrid, and could not see how much depended on the seas being safe. If Eliot could be kept in jail on a charge of piracy—no matter what the facts—until the Prince and the Infanta came, it would be easy to deprive him of his rank. He must be kept a prisoner; and events were running in Madrid—to outward eyes at least—so strongly in Calvert's favour, that he thought he should be able to hold his own. In striking Eliot he was helping himself, no less than serving Spain; for Nutt was a man whom he was bound to shield. Not only had he coaxed the King to sign a Pardon for him, but had paid the fees for that purpose out of his private purse. He had done so much, he could not help doing all. If Nutt were punished, the disgrace would fall on him. That his rival, Conway, was befriending Eliot made him press the point.

Calvert sent once more for Marten to his house, and told him in the curtest phrase to set

down fully and in writing answers to these queries:—first, whether Captain Nutt had plundered any ships after the Vice-Admiral of Devon had been with him, and had told him that the Pardon, though elapsed in time, was good in law? second, whether restitution of the stolen ship and goods had yet been made, as had been ordered by the Admiralty Court?

These queries were adroitly framed; and if the answers had been simply yes and no, good use could easily have been made of them in working on the King. Poor Marten's brain was racked. The drifts were crossing at his feet, and who could say which rush would be the master-tide? He begged a day to settle his report, and spent his time in looking at the facts. Eliot was not guilty:—that was something. Aylesbury favoured him:—and that was much. Conway was also on his side:—and that was more. But Calvert was pushing the Spanish marriage, which, if gall and wormwood to the English stomach, was triumphant in Madrid and Rome. On which side would the Favourite stand at last?

The next day Marten sent his answers to White Hall. They had been drawn with care, and were not much to Calvert's mind. Marten de-

cided for his own ideas, though in making his report he cautiously refrained from offering an opinion of his own. To the first query, whether Captain Nutt had plundered any vessels after he was told the Pardon was good in law, he answered that Nutt had continued to plunder such ships as he could meet and master till the Vice-Admiral went on board his ship. To the second query, whether Eliot had restored the ship and goods, he answered, that since the pirate came on shore an order for the restitution of his plunder had been issued from the Admiralty Court, and that the pirate's ship and goods were still in Dartmouth port. 'He might have made his certificate fuller had it pleased him,' said the angry Calvert, 'and with a good conscience also.'

Marten's answers seemed decisive. Conway was highly pleased with them, and Marten was rewarded for his honesty with an order to receive his customary brace of bucks!

But Calvert was not beaten off. So long as James could go on dreaming of a Spanish match his Catholic Secretary could not be disgraced; and now his dreaming was at fever heat. 'Yes, she is coming!' cried the King. 'Joy in Jerusalem! Peace in Zion!' sang the court in concert. Calvert

went to the King, and asked him, as a personal favour to himself, to sign a second Pardon for Captain Nutt, on the ground that the former pardon had not reached him in time. The King was then too lazy and too glad to refuse him, and he probably signed the warrant without glancing at it; for the Pardon covered not only Nutt himself, but the twenty-three pirates in Dartmouth jail; and gave them back — not only the pirate ship, but every article they had stolen before the first of May!

Conway got some promise on behalf of Eliot, whom he still befriended; but the Yorkshire Secretary begged that Eliot's case might be referred to the Council, on the ground that they should free him who had laid him up. Calvert took care the Lords should leave town without having signed an order for his release; and when they were gone away, he caused a whisper to go round the public places that Eliot remained in jail by order of my Lords.

Poor Marten, though surprised, felt happy he had steered so carefully between the rocks. In writing to thank the King, through Conway, for his brace of bucks, he said he was glad he had not expressed opinions of his own on Eliot's case,

as his opinion might have differed somewhat from that of my Lords. He prayed that all would yet be well, and that the Lord Admiral would not suffer loss.

Thus, ten weeks after Eliot had arrested Nutt on Dartmouth quay, the two men—pirate and captor—seemed to have taken each other's place. Nutt was a gentleman at large; his pirate crew were free; his ship had been restored to him; he had a royal pardon in his pocket; and he revelled in the favour of a Secretary of State. Eliot was a king's prisoner; his deputy, Randal, was in jail; his court was closed, his commission suspended; he was charged with inciting to piratical acts; and he could gain no hearing for himself in any court of law.

In this despair, he could but wait upon events in Spain; events which were to carry him from a yard in the Marshalsea, through the House of Commons, to his dungeon in the Bloody tower.

CHAPTER XX.

THE SPANISH OLIVE.

In two small rooms, in distant quarters of Madrid, two groups of men, with eager eyes and whispering tongues, were urging on each other, yea and nay, their views of what could now be done with the Prince of Wales.

One of these rooms was in an old hotel, in a dull street a long way from the royal square. The hotel was Digby's house, and round a table, dimly lighted by a swinging lamp, sat Digby, Buckingham, and Charles. When 'Tom' and 'John' came clattering into the Moorish courtyard, Digby, on the instant, barred his gates, and gave strict orders that none should enter, none go forth, that night. So great a secret could not be too closely kept. This move had thrown his game into the enemy's hand. So soon as it was known at court that Charles was in Madrid, the Spaniards would be sure to raise

their terms; to offer less, to ask for more; and Digby felt that as a man of the world, who dealt with facts as they arose, the Spaniards would be right in pressing higher terms. The 'Matter of Holland' was a weapon in their hands, for they had only to disclose that document to ruin Charles for ever in the eyes of honest men. Could Digby hide the Prince's presence in Madrid? The three men sat up deep into the night, debating what they ought to do next day. No doubt the coming of two strangers to the house was known — for every mansion in Madrid was watched; but then their rank could not be guessed; and they would naturally be reported by the spies as a master and his man. Here lay the hint on which they were inclined to act. The servants might give out that Buckingham had come. The Prince might pass for his companion. Charles must hold himself back, till Buckingham and Digby should have felt their way.

A second group was seated in a bed-room of the Alcazar; a boy upon the bed, with wistful eyes and hanging lip, just wakened from his sleep; a man fast rising to the prime of life, the minister and favourite of that startled youth. The boy was Philip, called El Grande, and his mid-

night visitor was Gaspar, Condé-duque de Olivares, just come in with the strangest news.

Some minutes since, the Duque had been eating his supper in another room, when Gondomar, who was as free to him as he was to the King, had come in softly, with his dark face lighted by unusual joy. 'What brings you to my house so late?' the Grandee cried; 'you look as though you had the King of England in Madrid.' The Condé smiled: 'If I have not got the King, I have got the Prince of Wales.' The Prince of Wales! How? when? where? Then Gondomar told the Duque how his spies, who watched both night and day round Digby's house, had seen the two men dash up to the door, had heard them ask for the ambassador, had noted what a stir was made by them, and how the gates were suddenly closed and barred. The Condé had no doubt that Charles was come. The Prince of Wales! Why this was better than the King; for James was but a poor old man, whose life could hardly have a year to run. Here was the bridegroom and the future king! When Gondomar had told his story, Gaspar rose, and saying, 'This is good news for us and for our holy Church,' crept softly to his master's room.

A boy of eighteen years, in feeble health, and only strong in family pride and in religious zeal, Philip the Fourth was but a piece of clay in Gaspar's hands.

A man of thirty-five, who had seen the world; bright in countenance, bland in manner, quick in speech; adorned with wealth and rank, and boasting of the noblest blood in Spain; Gaspar had set himself to captivate the King while he was still a prince, and played his game so well that Philip had given up Spain to him as thoroughly as Louis had given up France to Richelieu, and as James had given up England to Villiers. Agnes, his wife, was a favourite friend of the Infanta, so that Gaspar was a master of the palace and its royalties on every side.

Philip sat up in bed to hear this news. He thought, like Gaspar, that the Lord had given this prize into his hand for good of holy Church and the imperial line. For Gaspar's one idea as a ruler was to raise the House of Austria high above all rival houses, so that there should be once more, as under Charles the Fifth, one temporal prince, even as there was still one spiritual prince, of all the earth. But Spain and Austria were not gaining ground; and he was much afraid

lest they would soon be losing ground. Seven Provinces had been torn from them in the Netherlands. France was daily growing stronger and more jealous. Sweden was rising in the north, and Denmark was already mistress of the Baltic ports. The Turks were pushing up the Danube and along the Theiss. Nor was the Empire one in heart and mind; for most of the hardy north, and much of the populous west, were now in arms against the Pope. Since war had been renewed with Holland, they had lost their old command at sea; Ostend, Dunkirque, and Gravelines, were sinking into pirate lairs; and even the coasts of Galicia and Asturias were not safe from the avenging Dutch. On land, they had met with more success; for they had sense enough to seek for men with brains, and trust their armies to the ablest captains, even when they found such leaders in a Genoese banker and a Flemish priest. Ambrosio, Marchese Spinola, was victorious on the Lower Rhine; and John de Tserclas, Graf von Tilly, after driving Frederick and his Queen from Prague, had poured through Germany in fiery haste, repulsing the Margraf von Baden, and pushing the Graf von Mansfeld into France. Rhine, Main, Moselle, were in their power, and

England's Princess was an exile at the Hague. Yet these advantages might be lost to Spain if England drew her sword. A dozen ships, supported by the corsair fleets, would seal the ports, and cut off those supplies for which Spinola called more loudly every day. A score of regiments, supported by the troops in garrison, would force the Rhine, and carry the Queen of Hearts to Heidelberg once more. The Austrians had an enemy in their rear, for whom they could not wait; those Turkish janissaries who were riding through the plains of Hungary, up to the walls of Pesth. Another enemy in their front would put in peril more than the Catholic League had won. How could King James be kept from marching to his daughter's aid?

One point was clear to Philip as he sat in bed. He must not falter in the cause of God. The Palatinate should not pass to an enemy of the Roman Church. 'I swear to Thee, O Lord,' he cried, on turning to the crucifix above his bed, 'that the Prince of Wales shall never win me to do the thing of which Thy Vicar on earth shall not approve.'

Next morning Digby sent for Gondomar, and told him, as a secret, that my Lord of Buckingham

had arrived in Spain. No word was said about the Prince of Wales. Gondomar was to speak with Olivares; and at dusk that afternoon the royal favourites met in a garden of the palace, where they walked and talked till it was dark; when Gaspar, having got from Buckingham all his secrets, led him into the royal presence, where the Marquis kissed hands, and told his Majesty that the Prince of Wales had come. By this time every one in the streets was talking of these strangers; but a mystery was thrown about them, like the cap and mantle in a Spanish comedy of intrigue. A coach was sent to Charles, in which he was to drive up and down the course. King, Queen, Infanta, were to drive in a second coach; so that each might see the other well without pretending to see at all. A mob of Dons saluted, and the King took off his hat; yet no one was supposed to look at the mysterious coach. Then Gaspar came to Charles. The King, he said, was dying to speak with him. Charles answered he would wait upon his Majesty at once. 'You have no retinue,' urged Gaspar, 'for a prince.' 'Then let us meet in the open road,' suggested Charles. The royal carriage stopped, and Charles got in, with Digby as interpreter; and then the King

and Prince spent half an hour in driving up and down.

Olivares spoke to Villiers early. 'Let us settle this affair off-hand, without consulting Rome at all,' he whispered. Villiers wished to hear how they could do it; since the lady, as a Catholic, would need a dispensation from her Pope. 'Do it?' said Olivares, plainly; 'by the Prince conforming to her faith.' Gondomar had led his Sovereign to expect this change of creed; and his assurances were strengthened by this coming to Madrid. Unless intending to conform, Charles was not likely to have come to Spain.

The Prince of Wales, more nervously alive than Villiers was to personal risks, began to fear that if he failed to win his bride, he might not find it easy to retire from Spain. He found that he was watched by spies; those wakeful spies whom Gondomar had trained; and even when a house was given him in the Calle de Las Infantas, near the palace, he could gain no speech from the damsel he had come to woo. All court officials let him see that he was treated, not as a suitor to the young Infanta, but as guest and brother to the King. He chafed at these restraints. The Doña Maria had not seen him yet;

and when he played the lover, leaping, like Romeo, her garden wall, she fled from him with screams, as though he had been some poisonous reptile; and the officers of her household put him with but scant civility to the garden-gate. He was allowed to write that he would wait for her seven years; but was not suffered to see her more than twice or thrice. Even then he could not speak with her a word. Once only, as a favour, he was carried into the Queen's apartments, where the Infanta was. Some words, set down for him, he was allowed to speak; but he forgot his part, and was saying something else, when her Majesty turned on him in deep surprise, and Doña Maria showed him by her bearing that her mind was hurt. The lover drove back to his lodgings sore at heart. This Spanish courtship was a dull affair; and Charles might well have sighed once more, as he had done before the portrait at White Hall, that princes ought to have a wife to love, if they must also have a wife for show.

But Gaspar needed time; for Tilly and the League were not yet safe against all comers in the Upper Rhine. So songs, and plays, and bull-fights, and processions, were intruded on these

English guests. A bull-fight, which is still remembered for its roll of slain, was given in the Plaza Mayor, and Lopez de Vega wrote a song for Charles, which ran:—

'Charles Stuart, led by love,
Has come from far
To see in Spanish skies
Maria, his star.'

More time was wanted by the Spaniards, and more time was got. The friars preached; the ladies smiled; the crowds applauded; Archie went to court, and made his jests; and meantime Tilly sacked and burnt the Lutheran cities on the Upper Rhine.

Among the motley crowd which followed Charles to Spain was Archie Armstrong, the royal fool; at least a wiser following than Dr. Lamb, who had been left a prisoner in the King's Bench, arrested on a charge of sorcery. King Philip took a fancy to this fool, and often sent for him to the palace, where the braw Scotch callant was as much at home as Sancho in the Duchess's drawing-room. Weeks elapsed before Charles was suffered to see the Infanta; but the fool, in motley coat, was carried into the lady's chamber, where she sat with her duennas and maids of honour; and there,

the fellow laughed and jeered with the women, like Sancho with the Duchess and her court. One day they were praising Max of Bavaria, who with fewer men had driven the Winter King from Prague. 'Hist!' cried Archie, in reply, 'and I will tell you a little tale. A hundred and forty ships set sail from Spain; they attacked a little English fleet; and only ten of these Spanish ships came back to tell what had become of all the rest.'

While Archie told them truth in jest, the Spaniards scored their game. King James, to place his minion on a level with Gaspar, sent to Buckingham the patent of a Duke. Buckingham wrote back to him for some of the crown jewels, and especially for 'a collar for your dog.' The young comedian played his part, not caring to what end it led, if only he got his collar and his daily sport. He took the treaty out of Digby's hands. He used high words with Gaspar, and made love in public to Gaspar's wife. He went to hear the Carmelites in company with Charles; and when the Fathers ceased their talking, leapt from his chair, threw down his hat, and danced upon it, as the only answer to such folly he could deign to make. On noticing how much his freedom shocked the punctilious Dons, he laughed at their

stately manner, and pushed, and stared, and swore, until the grave hidalgoes fled from him in wrath. He came into the Prince's room without his breeches; he was rude to the Infantas; but he could not weary out a man like Gaspar, who had everything to lose by temper and to gain by time. Day by day the talk ran thus. 'We must have the Palatinate,' said the English. 'Ha! the Palatinate is not ours to give,' replied the Spaniards. 'You can force the Kaiser to give it up.' 'Force him! How?' 'By breaking with him.' 'We can never break with him; the Kaiser is our chief; and if he were to call our royal master Knave, and slap him on the face, we could not break with him. But we can use our influence. We will send to Vienna. You must give us time.'

'We want to have the treaty signed,' the English said. 'All in good time,' the Spaniards answered; 'there are things to settle, and we have to feel our way.' One conversation took this form. 'The Infanta will be safe in London?' 'Yes.' 'No fear about her household?' 'None.' 'That household must comprise a bishop, a confessor, and a staff of twenty priests?' 'Allowed.' 'No insult shall be offered to her faith, and not

a word be spoken to annoy her?' 'None.' 'All English who may please can come to mass in the royal chapel?' 'Hum!' 'You bar that point?' 'Well, no; go on.' 'The royal children shall be under their mother's charge until the age of ten?' 'Agreed.' 'The King shall instantly suspend the penal laws?' 'Yes; that is promised.' 'These penal laws shall be repealed by Parliament within three years?' 'We cannot answer for the House of Commons.' 'But the Pope will have it so,' replied the Spaniards. 'You must do without the Pope,' the English said. 'How can we move without the Pope?' 'Then all is ended.' 'Stay!' rejoined the Spaniards, 'we can use our influence, even in Rome. We have some claims on the Holy Father. We will send an agent. You must give us time.'

Then Gaspar sent swift messengers to Vienna and to Rome, who urged the Kaiser to press the war, and told the Pope that Philip would never yield the match.

While troops were hurrying to the Rhine, the Papal agents were instructed to suggest new terms. The Prince of Wales must live in a court of priests; his wife's confessors must be near him day and night; he must engage his royal

word that he will hear these priests, upon his wife's request, at all times, and with decent reverence, on the mysteries of their faith. The Princess and her priests must educate his children up to twelve. Those oaths of allegiance, which were fixed by English law, must be replaced by forms of words drawn up for them in Rome. The King of Spain must be accepted as Protector of the English Catholics—in effect, if not in name. King Philip must engage his oath that England shall keep these terms with Rome, and hold his armies and armadas ready to enforce his oath!

As month on month flew by, the Prince, grown cross with waiting, gave up point by point, until the ministers began to dread lest he would give up all, and then compel them to declare their policy in words. 'Given way again!' laughed Gaspar, when his secretary brought him some startling tale; 'I should as soon have expected to hear the news of my own death.' They asked the Prince to swear an oath—'an oath of the Escorial,' and he swore. They asked him to indite a letter to the Pope, and Charles complied, in terms which helped to cost him, when the truth was known, his crown and life.

The one excuse that can be made for Charles is, that he played with Gaspar's cards, met lie with lie, capped fraud by fraud, and only gave his pledges in the hope that he would afterwards be able to break his oath.

When all that could be done with the marriage treaty had been done, the 'Matter of Holland' was brought up. But little time could be gained by parleying on this new ground; for Charles declared himself ready to perfect that treaty when the match was signed. He spoke the truth; for James had sent to Digby his commands to push this matter, with the necessary powers. Gaspar could say no more, without creating trouble; for to give up Zeeland and Holland to King James was farther from his mind than giving an Infanta to the Prince of Wales.

More months flew past. So far as outside men could see, the match was still going on, the college of divines at work, and Olivares bent on smoothing things in Rome. But Charles was sickening fast of Spain; his followers were at daggers with their hosts; and Villiers, tired of making love to swarthy Doñas, was impatient to go home. As Charles and Villiers cooled, the Spanish minister

grew warm. On finding that his guests might start some morning, hurt and angry, Gaspar fell back somewhat in his terms, detained the Prince with hope, and even went so far, when pressed for time, as actually to sign the draft.

James heard at length that all was going on well in Spain. The contract had been made; his son would soon bring home his bride; the 'Matter of Holland' was as good as done. At this bright moment, Nutt—the pirate Nutt—was pardoned by the poor old King; while Eliot, his patriotic Vice-Admiral, was a prisoner in the Marshalsea, and the Earl of Oxford, his patriotic Admiral of the Fleet, was guarded in the Tower.

But, lo—a change! Two days after Charles had signed the marriage treaty Tilly fought the battle of Stadtloo; and three weeks later the Elector Palatine was compelled by his misfortunes to accept a truce. The war was over, and the Kaiser master of the Rhine.

Then Gaspar, who had waited for success, threw down his mask. New terms were named, new difficulties raised. The Prince surmised, from what he saw and heard, not only that the olive was forbidden fruit, but that his person was no longer safe. Cajoled, abashed, and ruined,

he resolved to go; but even then he could not see things in the living light; and dreaming that Maria would regret his handsome face, and that the King would change his mind, he left a proxy to complete the marriage in Lord Digby's hands.

CHAPTER XXI.

PRISONS OPENED.

A CLANG of bells, a blaze of fires, a roar of voices, met the Prince and Duke as the returning prodigals crossed the Thames and drove to their apartments in York House. As yet, the world knew little of their doings in Madrid; but Charles had come without his bride; and, on the instant, that great fact was all that citizens cared to know. The Duke was said to have mocked the Dons; the Prince to have broken off the match; and both the Duke and Prince were breathing war against Spain. Here was a cry to rouse men's souls. War with the Harlot! War against the Beast! In every church, in every house, the talk was now of ships and guns. The gates were opened, and the flood of passion poured upon the land. At every corner fires were lit; at every doorway casks were broached. Rich bankers coiled up pipes of sack, and Cadiz wine was tossed off merrily

to the cry of 'Down with Spain!' A sense of jubilee seized on men not prone to heat and waste. Staid citizens spread their tables in the streets, and bade all passers-by sit down and eat. Poor people supped on god-wit and potato-pie. The 'prentice lads sang riotous staves, and Cheapside damsels danced round decorated poles. Near friends embraced each other; neighbours who had not yet spoken pressed each other's 'palms. Old sores were healed, old feuds forgotten, in the public joy. A panic of good-nature seized on persons who, in ordinary times, would not have done a generous deed. Small debts were cancelled on the spot. Large debtors were relieved by men who had never heard their names. Good citizens drove to the Compter and the Fleet, and paid the fees of such poor prisoners as were lying there for fees. Crowds would have forced the Tower, the Gatehouse, and the Marshalsea, except from a desire, which all men felt, that James should play his part—a royal part—in this great public act. All London, as the Prince and Duke were but too well aware, was beating with one mighty pulse of life.

'I never saw such gladness in my life,' wrote Laud, in sore dismay. 'They swear to put a ring

through the nose of Leviathan,' said Wentworth, with a sneer; the haughty spirit lowering through his pale, cadaverous face.

While Prince and Duke were resting for a moment at York House, the Spanish ministers came to wait upon the Prince. The Prince refused to see them; and the people, hearing his refusal, took up the news, and bore it onward with a lusty shout. In driving through the streets, on their way towards Royston, where the King lay sick with gout, they met a gang of felons in the hangman's cart; and Charles, in answer to a call for mercy, was compelled to stop his coach, and give these rogues their lives.

Such scenes, if lost on Charles, who looked upon these crowds with an impassive grace, were noted well by Buckingham, whose quick and volatile nature longed for such plaudits as an actor gains. For once he had his measure of delight. Amidst the uproar round York House he heard, 'A Villiers!—a Villiers!' mingled with the shouts of 'Down with Spain!' and 'Ho! the Prince of Wales!' It was a fearful joy; for he was but too sure that had the truth been told —the truth about their long delay,—about the proxy left with Digby,—and about the Escorial

oath,—these crowds, now wishing him a merry life, would have been yelling and cursing round his gates. That truth, if he could help it, they should never learn.

'All over!' gasped the King, when they had told him all. It could not be; his boys had been too hot; for Digby gave him hope; and Secretary Calvert gave him hope. A plan pursued by him for twenty years could not have vanished like a puff of smoke. He was a weak old man; this match was all he lived for; if his heart were crushed, he cared not when he was to lay down crown and life. The Duke fell back on his comic powers. He drew for James a ludicrous picture of the Spanish court; the dwarfs and dueñas, monks and espadas, bishops and buffoons; a motley of lace and rags, of piety and intrigue, of gilded coaches and empty plates. James fell into a roar of laughter, which compelled him to hold his sides, and mop the tears from beard and cheek. Such peals and shrieks had not been heard by page and courtier for a year.

'What must be done?' he asked the youths. 'Throw open all the prisons,' they replied, 'and call a Parliament at once.'

No wiser counsel could be given, if only it

were truly meant. 'A Pardon!' and 'A Parliament!' were cries coming up from every town. A Pardon was the sign of peace at home; a Parliament was the means of war abroad. These things the nation craved with burning and resistless appetite; and if the Prince of Wales had been content to play the part of an English prince,—to break with Spain, to wed a Protestant wife, to fight with the reforming states,—he might have had all England at his back. But Charles meant nothing of the kind. To him the Pardon was to be a trick; the Parliament was to be a fraud. So far from breaking with the King of Spain, he was resolved to have Maria for his wife. He wanted her on easier terms; but he was fixed on having her; and Villiers told him that the way to bring these Spaniards to their senses, was to frighten them by seeming—it was never to be more than seeming—to abandon the negotiation, and to join the English people in demanding war. For such a purpose only Charles would help to swell these popular cries.

James lent his ear to this proposal of a Pardon; for a Pardon offered him just then a means of keeping an unpopular pledge. Some days before his son arrived in London, James

had given his word in secret to the Spanish agents, that all priests and Jesuits then in custody should be set at large, in deference to their great protector in Madrid. That pledge was given when James was hoping for the best; but how, when fires were lit and feasts were spread against the match, could such a pledge be kept? The Spanish agents held him to his word, while London streets were ringing for the swift arrest and instant banishment of every man who wore the livery of Spain. One course, and only one, lay open to the King; to join the cry for a general Pardon, and to set the Jesuits free as part of that royal act of grace. This course was taken, and at once. The morning after Charles and Buckingham arrived at Royston, secret word was sent to the Lord Keeper Williams, that the priests should be privately enlarged, and that the agents should be told these faithful servants of Philip owed their safety to his Majesty's affection for the King of Spain. Then public orders were addressed to Sir Allan Apsley, his Majesty's Lieutenant of the Tower, to Thomas More, his Majesty's Keeper of the Marshalsea, to Aquila Wykes, his Majesty's Keeper of the Gatehouse, to Sir George Reynell,

Marshal of the King's Bench, commanding these officers to open the gates for all their prisoners —with a few exceptions—whom they held on warrants signed by either the Council or the King himself.

For years the political dungeons had not seen so large a flight. Except some Irish chieftains, who were hardly known by name, two prisoners only were detained in Apsley's charge at the Tower. These two prisoners were the Earl of Oxford and the Countess of Shrewsbury; and the tide of public feeling ran so strong that even these great personages were soon released by special acts of grace. The Countess, who had not been broken by her long imprisonment, was ordered to live in free confinement with Arthur Lake, the Bishop of Bath and Wells. The Earl came out of the Tower to keep his Christmas revels, and to wed the fair Diana Cecil, a daughter of the Earl of Exeter, and to spend in gallant style some portion of her thirty thousand pounds.

The Irish chieftains left in the Tower as rebels, whom no amnesty could touch, were Cormac O'Neil, a brother of Tyrone; Con O'Neil, a son of Tyrone; Neil O'Donnel, and his son.

Three of these Irish captives had been so long immured, that Apsley could not say for what offences they were under ward. One Brian O'Rourk had been sent from the Gatehouse to the Tower a year ago; but his offence was said to be 'unknown.' These Irish rebels had no friends at Charing Cross; the gates swung back on them as Oxford rode away; and soon they were 'forgotten in the Tower.'

Among those who left the Marshalsea under this act of grace were Eliot, Vice-Admiral of Devon, and Mervin, Admiral in the Narrow Seas. The prisoners who remained were four in number: men who had been committed by the Lord Steward's officers for private crimes. Father Preston went away with his fellow-priests. The Duke's astrologer and 'devil,' not so lucky as the priest, was left in jail. Doctor Lamb, who lived in great men's houses, and whose demoniac power was said to be so vast that he could open graves and set the heavens on fire, was treated with peculiar sharpness by the 'prentice-boys. His life was lewd; his hands were stained with blood. The latest charge against this sorcerer was that of having laid a spell on Thomas, Lord Windsor, one of his dearest 'sons.' Windsor

was a Catholic peer, whose family was suspected in the Powder Plot; and Lamb, who knew so many secrets of the time, declared that if they kept him in the prison he would tell the world strange stories. Villiers could not leave his necromancer in the bench, and when the storm was somewhat over, Lamb was quietly let out.

'A Parliament!' was not so welcome to the King; but Prince and Duke were now above the King.

'A Parliament!' murmured James. What would become of him if Parliament should meet? They might revive that right of speech. They might resent his tearing up their protest. They might question his proceedings at the Tower. A Parliament would declare against the match; would pry into his secrets; and would urge him into war. The Duke was fierce, the Prince was cold. Such fears, they said, were vain. They knew the people, and could answer for the members. See what fires were lit, what shouts were raised! To treat with Spain, they wanted ships, forts, guns, and men; and here were towns and counties eager to give them ships, forts, guns and men. Let them take all the people offered. The Commons could be managed. Villiers knew

the popular leaders, and could trust them. Not a word should come from them about the right of speech, the imprisoned members, and the torn-out leaf. Both Charles and Villiers felt that they must now go on. To pause was to perish; even to go forward was to perish; but the end that way was not in sight. The Duke could see that if he would save himself, he must appear in front, and get the nation between himself and Spain. The Prince could see that, if he would win his bride, he must obtain her by a show of force. Their policy was fixed by fate; a policy of fraud and lying; yet not the less, they thought, a policy beyond their choice. The old King mumbled, sulked, and signed.

James lived a few months more, but he had ceased to be the ruling power. The Duke sent word into the shires that but for him no Parliaments would have been called for all future time.

The Howards saw this change of front with terror; for a rupture with the court of Spain was loss of pension and loss of power. A war would be their ruin. Arundel felt that his seat in the Council was no longer safe; and Suffolk, who had long been waiting for a seat on the board, consented, as a last resource, to marry

his son, Sir Edward (afterwards Lord Howard of Escrick), to Jane Butler, one of Buckingham's penniless cousins. Villiers liked such flatteries from great houses; at the wedding-feast he promised to be a father to the pair; but even his light genius shrank from giving a second seat in the Council to that powerful and unpopular house. From all sides he was urged to drive the suspected Arundel from the board; and when Lord Oxford left the Tower at Christmas, bets were laid at court that Arundel would shortly occupy his cell.

A reference of the question, Peace or War? to seven wise members of the Council, threw the court into two camps. Imagining that this question was a lovers' quarrel between the King and Duke, the seven wise men took sides according to their sense of what was safe. Carlisle and Conway were for war; Calvert and Weston were for peace. Williams and Cranfield were for neither; they were only for the stronger side. Williams, who knew that James was bent on peace and on the match, conjectured that the Duke was only shamming zeal for war; and, not yet seeing that the King had ceased to rule, he voted with his Majesty against his Grace. To break with Spain

was to forego his dream of wearing the Cardinal's hat that Wolsey wore. The votes were four to to three: majority of one in seven for peace. The Duke, enraged against his tools — this parson Williams, whom his breath had made Lord Keeper, and this broker Cranfield whom his smile had made Lord Treasurer! — called heaven and earth to witness that their fall should be as sudden as their rise.

This Council vote was kept a secret—more or less — for not a chance remained of passing a supply-bill through the coming House, unless the court should talk of war; nay, talk in that high tone, as though the armies were to march, the fleets to sail, so soon as means were voted, and the guns were shipped. The world must be deceived. A clatter of inspection must go on, especially at the Tower, the heart of our defence. An order, therefore, came for Apsley to survey the guns and stores, inspect the officers and gunners, test the wharf and outworks, note what masonry was unsound, and see that the magazines were full. An excellent report was made; and having served to mystify the town, this excellent report on the Tower was thrust into a hole in Conway's desk.

CHAPTER XXII.

A PARLIAMENT.

A PARLIAMENT was a desperate cure for men in danger like the Prince and Duke. They wished to stop men's tongues, and they were sending for the talkers out of every shire. They wished to hide some ugly blots, and they were calling up men whose duty it would be to sift all facts. They wished to gain supplies, without being pledged to take a definite course; and they were going to ask these grants from an assembly which had never yet given, in that loose form, one penny to the crown. Could wit of man enable them to cajole the country and deceive the Commons into granting war supplies without an actual war?

Lamb's spells were useless now; nor was the wizard free to help his master in the hour of need. That rogue had barely got his freedom on the charge of sorcery, ere he was taken, tried, convicted on a charge of rape. For rape the penalty was

hanging, and a jury had convicted him of rape. To snatch him from the gallows was not easy; since the evidence was clear, the judge consented to the finding, and the public clamoured for his life. But could they trust him on the gallows? He would blab. When lying in the Bench, he turned on Windsor with a threat of telling what he knew about the Powder Plot. If he were sent to Tyburn, what would he not say before he swung? Chief Justice Ley was asked to see what could be done for Lamb. Ley made a vague report. The verdict turned upon the evidence; the witnesses were humble folk; the criminal was a man of note; it was a case for pardon—if the King saw fit. For once the King was slow in a bad cause; and Ley was told that his report was much too vague; and he must answer clearly whether Lamb was worthy of the royal grace. Again the rogue got off, but with an odious fame, some part of which was settling on the Duke.

To call in Wentworth was impossible as yet. The knight for Yorkshire was disposed to serve the King; and Calvert, who was well aware of his supreme abilities, was eager to arrange the terms. A peerage, with a seat in council, were his claims. He wanted power,

and promised, if they gave him power, that Charles should be as much a king as Philip or as Louis was a king. But Villiers, light of head and gay of heart, recoiled in comical dismay from Wentworth's haughty language and imperious looks; and Wentworth, dark and scornful, stood aside in silence, broken only now and then by crashes of electric storm.

No man could help the Duke in such a strait save that unscrupulous divine who found a scapegoat in his Bible, and presented it at court. The man, who had converted Lady Catharine, who had ruined Lord St. Albans, who had tricked the Canon of Cambrai, and sold his conscience for the prospect of a Cardinal's hat, might help in such a pass; but Williams and his Grace were now at strife. Williams had voted with the King, and Villiers had sworn to hurl him from his height. That vote was a mistake; that oath was also a mistake; and they had only to adjust the point of view in order to be friends once more. In voting with the King for peace, the Lord-Keeper thought he was casting his vote against a falling man; in swearing he would ruin Williams, Buckingham thought he was clearing from his path a minister who had ceased to be his slave.

A few words set things right; and soon that Eunuch's brain was seething with a plan for marshalling all parties into one vast army for the Duke. All parties were to be cajoled and tricked; and Williams—Rector, Dean, Bishop, Lord-Keeper and expectant Cardinal—was the only man in England who could venture to cajole them all.

He made himself a solvent for all passions, all ideas. He could feel with each and all, and drop his words of balm in every ear. To peers who hated Parliaments, he could hint that James was bankrupt, and must get supplies; to burgesses who hated kings, he could suggest that James was rich, and might go on without them to the end. All parties in the State were right; and king and country ought to meet each other in pacific mood. To courtiers who resisted an appeal to the country, he was ready to declare in secret that the King could not go on another week. To patriots who suspected motives for this hot appeal, he was as ready to declare, in secret, that the crown could do without them for a hundred years. He sought the Undertakers, Phelips, Digges, and Sandys, and made a bargain with them in his Grace's name. They were to keep the House from broaching dangerous themes; they

were to drop the right of speech; they were to raise no question of prerogatives and liberties; they were to say no more about the protest and the torn-out leaf. A meeting of the House should be a sign of concord, not a cause of strife. The courtiers must forget their jealousy of the House; the burgesses forego their strictures on the crown.

The Lord-Keeper met with great success. By means of Digges, some members of the popular party came into the plan proposed for interchange of thought, and came to accept this policy of a common sacrifice of wrongs. Among these men it was agreed that war votes should be swiftly passed, that grievances should be redressed, that nothing should be said about the torn-out leaf, that all allusion to the right of speech should be avoided, but that everything should be told about the events which had occurred in Spain.

These intricate deceptions were too much for James. He could not trust those Undertakers who had roused his gall. When told they must come in, he broke into a dotard's rage. 'They shall not be returned,' he pottered. When the shires and towns returned them, he exclaimed, 'Then they must be expelled.' The House would

have to raise that point. Could they be sent away? Could they be sent to Ulster, on commission, and detained by business till the prate was over? Such a trick had served the King already. Why should it not be played again? If Pym, Coke, Sandys, and Phelips, could be sent to Ulster, he might live in quiet. No one thought of Eliot. Wentworth was a friend of peace, and even a friend of Spain. From him the King had more to hope than fear. But Coke and Pym were dangerous speakers; these, at least, he would not have; and warrants for the Ulster mission must be drawn at once.

But Williams told the Duke that such a course was full of snares. If he would use the popular leaders, he must seem to trust them. If he wished to carry his money-bills, he must not open his campaign by acts which would alarm the popular camp. Wise men should work by wit, and not by force. To exile Pym and Coke, on pretexts like the pretended Irish mission, was to court attack, and bring on some decisive vote. They must be prompt to give, as they were keen to take; if they would lead the Commons, they must urge the King to yield this mission to Lough Foyle. The Duke supported

Williams, and the King reluctantly gave up his point.

The session opened well. No sooner had the members sworn the oaths, than Sir Edward Giles, a western man, secure in popular votes, threw down his glove; not only to the Secretary of State in person, but to all the tribe of lords and pages who had made a boast of their fidelity to Spain. Giles moved that certain suits, then pending in the courts of law against Sir John Eliot, member for Newport, late a prisoner in the Marshalsea, be stayed by orders from that House.

This motion was a note of war. These suits against Sir John were known to have been raised by Calvert's tools and dupes; who wished to punish him, as Vice-Admiral, for disturbing Nutt, and hinder him, as burgess, from fulfilling his duties in that House. A Secretary of State could count on all the official votes, as well as on the votes of men who laboured to stand well at court. In ordinary times, a Secretary of State could easily have stifled such a motion; but the times were far from ordinary; and Giles's motion was adopted by the House.

Then Eliot rose, and for the first hour England heard that voice, the waves of which will

echo through her story to the end of time. Wentworth and Eliot were soon at war. They had their flouts of wit, their keen retorts, their passages of strength. Eliot was for France, while Wentworth was for Spain. Eliot spoke for war, while Wentworth spoke for peace. Is there much need to add—that Eliot was sincere, unchangeable, in what he said, while Wentworth, as a practical statesman, though he had ideas of his own, could put them forth and draw them back at will?

The Duke rode down to the House of Lords, accompanied by the Prince of Wales, and gave, in Charles's presence, with his warm assent, a narrative of their Spanish trip. His story was a fiction, from his first word and to his last; but in the ring of those who heard him none could know the tale was false, except the Prince of Wales.

He spoke of the Spaniards as being false throughout; of Digby as assisting them to deceive the Prince. In going into Spain the Prince and he had but one object; to recover Heidelberg and Manheim from the Catholic League. They had no other thought. They would not have delayed one week in Spain; they would never have left that proxy in Digby's hands; they would not

have sworn the Escorial oath; they would not have paid the Infanta one single compliment; but that by seeming to accept the Spanish terms they hoped to get the Protestant Rhine restored.

These points were put so coarsely, that the ambassador from Spain declared the Duke had stained his master's honour, and he asked from James such justice as the King of Spain would grant, if any grandee of that country should traduce the English king. What justice? the Ambassador was asked. He boldly answered, —'The offender's head!'

This wild demand made Buckingham a hero. Who could doubt his patriotism when the Spaniards asked his blood, as years ago they had asked for Raleigh's blood? A crowd ran round his coach, lit bonfires in his name, and rang the parish-bells. Both Houses of Parliament endorsed his saucy speech—the Lords declaring by a vote that he had done good service to his country; while the Commons took upon themselves to say, that he had not affronted the King of Spain; that he had told his countrymen no more than he was bound to tell; and that in making his narration of events he had 'deserved well of the Commonwealth and the King.'

Eliot took no part in this delusion. When he rose it was to recall the previous session and its great events. He claimed the privilege of speech; he joined in that high protest of the House; he proved that liberty of speech was for the King's advantage; and he urged that measures should be taken to secure that right. Phelips opposed his motion, as inopportune; but the House, inspired by eloquence such as it had rarely heard, assented; naming a committee to consider and maintain their liberties in all coming time.

A note was struck by Eliot which warned the court, that, loud as were the plaudits showered upon the Prince and Duke, those plaudits meant no more than a desire for war.

Rudyard brought on the question, backed by Coke and Seymour. Eliot went still farther. 'Let us rend these treaties,' he exclaimed, 'and man our ships. There has been talk enough; the time has come to act. Let us arm our forts. The enemy is said to detain our ships; our answer to that wrong should be a powerful fleet.' Such words had quite another ring to an Undertaker's words, pretending much and meaning nothing. Pym, a man not likely to be tricked by Williams, backed him in a noble speech; and Eliot's motion,

seconded by Pym, was carried by an undivided vote.

The Prince was frightened and the Duke surprised. So far, their march was stayed. A House which was to raise no question of free speech, had named a committee to protect that right. A House which was to give them money, leaving them to spend it, had begun the session with a warlike vote. A money-bill was now brought in and passed. Once more the voice of Eliot rose above the throng,—'You say we are poor! Spain is rich. Break with her! She is our Indies. Break, and break at once!' The money-bill was voted as an act of war.

That night a stranger in London would have thought the people mad. They fancied war was come at last; and bells rang out, and bonfires blazed, and casks of wine were broached. A fire was lit near the Spanish embassy, and every man supposed to be a Don was hooted in the public street. 'Cobblers, bigots, and the brethren,' cried the haughty Wentworth, 'have insulted the servants of a friendly prince.' Wentworth was a friend of Spain, though not as Suffolk was a friend of Spain. 'Let them be punished,' cried the Undertaker Phelips. 'First inquire into the facts,'

said Eliot. 'Better let the matter drop,' said Maynard; and the matter was allowed to drop.

The House now turned on Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, whom the Duke gave up to them with fear. Poor James objected, and with reason, to this trial by impeachment of his treasurer. But Williams knew that they must have a scape-goat; if not Cranfield, it must be himself. 'Not yet, not yet,' he thought. The Prince of Wales was easily induced to give up Cranfield to the Commons. 'You will live to have your bellyful of Parliamentary impeachments,' said the poor old King to his sedate and faithless son.

Cranfield, since his peerage and his marriage to Ann Brett, had plundered everybody within his reach; and his official posts as Master of the Wardrobe, Master of the Wards, Privy Councillor, Commissioner of the Treasury, and Lord High Treasurer, put almost everybody within his reach. A list of his peculations would fill a book. He robbed the magazine of arms; he pocketed bribes from suitors in his court; he made false entries of the royal debts; he sold his name to grants and privy seals; he kept vast sums received from the farmers of accounts. Abbott, the virtuous Primate, who had not forgotten Cranfield's conduct

to the great Chancellor, took part in bringing him to justice. After an impartial hearing Cranfield was condemned to loss of all his places, to a fine of fifty thousand pounds, and to imprisonment for life.

War being voted, Cranfield ruined, and supplies obtained, the session was prorogued. The Prince and Duke seemed crowned with success. Their version of events had been received; the Spaniards had been buffeted and sent away; a large supply had been obtained. The price they paid for these advantages seemed small; a word, a smile, a nod; the word a breath, the smile a leer, the nod a snare. Their policy of deception was complete; and Charles was only frightened lest the Parliament he had tricked so well should press him yet more warmly not to curse them with a Papist Queen.

Cranfield was lodged and left in the Bloody tower. On seeing the gates close on him people said, 'In future ages men will wonder how my Lord St. Albans could have fallen, how my Lord of Middlesex could have risen.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

DIGBY, EARL OF BRISTOL.

THE closing years of James the First found Apsley still Lieutenant of the Tower. Sir Allan, now a staid and stately gentleman, with brood of youngsters in the garden, had been wild and wayward in his youth; a lad who ran away from school, who diced away his money, and when all was gone, went out to Cadiz and to Dublin, where he learned the art of war, and married a rich widow, and became a knight. A second and a third wife blessed his love; the third of whom, a sister of Sir Edward Villiers' lady, brought him into close relations with the court. Through Buckingham he had got the Lieutenant's place; for which he paid no less than twenty-five hundred pounds. His second and his third wives brought him children, nine of whom lived in the Tower; and as the kind old soldier kept in his house the offspring of his Irish love by her former lord, the

grim old pile was gladdened with their happy faces and their joyous shouts. One of the girls was Lucy Apsley, dear to all readers as the future wife of Colonel Hutchinson, the purest and bravest soldier in a camp where most of the men were brave and pure. A picture, lightly touched and truly drawn, is left to us by Lucy of that household in the Tower. We see, in her fair page, as in a glass, the grave old warrior, stiff and bronzed with time; the sweet young wife and mother, not yet twenty-five years old; the brood of youngsters, children of three several wives, now romping on the green, now wending softly to St. Peter's Church. Lucy herself was born in the Lieutenant's house. Her mother, a St. John of Lydyard, was not eighteen when she came to live in the Tower, and take a woman's part, as the Lieutenant's wife, in ministering to so many noble griefs. The Wizard Earl was lodging in the Martin tower; the Countess of Shrewsbury lay in the Queen's lodgings; Cormac O'Neil, and his little nephew Con, were on the northern wall; Raleigh was toiling in the Garden House. 'She was a mother to the prisoners,' says her daughter; going into their cells, providing them with broths and cordials, brightening up their rooms, and

shedding by her beauty and her tenderness a sunshine in that shady place. She had to receive into her house a line of guests; the wicked Lady Somerset, the cunning Arundel, the dashing Oxford, the illustrious Bacon; but the man to whom she owed the most was Raleigh, who had taught this girlish matron how to blend her simples, how to tend her sick, and make herself a comfort to the poor.

Her guests continued to arrive.

When Charles and Villiers left Madrid, the match, and all that turned upon the match, had fallen under Digby's care; and this diplomatist, though grieved to find his house of cards come down, was of opinion that his house of cards might still be raised again. A check provokes strong men to put out strength.

As an ambassador, Digby had a great respect for embassies; and being a master of his art, as Gondomar was a master of his art, he kept in his pay a host of spies, of under-secretaries, and of councillors' wives; and through such means as intercepted letters and clandestine copies of public writs, he was hardly a day behind Olivares in his knowledge of what was being said and done at the Spanish court. All letters of importance

passed beneath his eye; all secrets were repeated in his ear. Keys to the newest cyphers were in his desk, and confidential passages from Gondomar's despatches hardly reached the King of Spain ere copies of them were in Digby's hands. Through these dark channels he had made—some years ago—his great discovery of the pensions paid to Cecil, Monson, Lady Suffolk, and their kin; and time had not yet filched the cunning of discovery from his brain. Yet he was popular in Spain; for in his mind and manner Digby was an old Castilian don. He put his trust in bribes; he knew the price of every clerk; and if he had been left to work alone, he would have raised once more his ruined pile of cards.

That what the Prince and Duke had tumbled over in his presence was a house of cards, he knew, and long had known. Some years ago he had discovered from a stolen paper that the court of Spain was playing with his master a game for time. He smiled, and watched them play. He thought the match was useful to his country, and he thought that Philip could be forced by skilful playing to accept in earnest what he had proposed in guile.

That James and Charles both wished his

treaty to proceed he had no doubt, and that his treaty had been put in peril by the Duke he also had no doubt. The question was, how far the King would go to gain an end he passionately desired? Would he break with Villiers? Could the Duke be driven from power? If so, the match might still be made. To learn the King's true mind he must repair to London, and he wrote to James for leave of absence from his post.

Aware of what was pending in Madrid, and strong in his alliance with the popular leaders, Buckingham took his measures boldly. Some of the messengers sent to Spain were told to spread reports that Digby was recalled, disgraced, and lost. The Duke, they were to say, had turned against him; he was charged with treason; he might find himself a prisoner; he would certainly not return to Spain.

Much anger was excited in the Spanish court, and the expression of this anger wrought him harm. Philip, who sent for him to the palace, offered him a home in Spain, and Olivares laid a sheet of paper on his table, telling him he was authorized by the King to bid him fill it up—condé, duque, grandee of the highest class; senator, governor; any title, any office; he had

but to ask and have, if only he preferred to end his days in Spain. Duque de Infantado was suggested as a title he might like; and when the English nobleman put aside these courtesies with a smile of thanks, the minister asked him whether some protection could not be extended to him on his reaching home?

Those words made Digby start. Protection from a foreigner to an English peer on English soil! The question stung him to the quick. Was he a minister of Spain? If not, why should he need protection from an alien prince? How could he take such courtesies? These offers were an insult. He must go at once; for he would rather die in London than remain a grandee of the highest class in Spain.

When Digby went to take his leave, the King drew off a ring, and placed it for remembrance on his finger. Every one who saw the monarch marvelled, for an act of courtesy so personal and gracious was a thing unknown in that frigid court. That finger-ring, as Digby found, was not a fairy gift to ward off evil days.

On crossing into France, he heard that Villiers, who was riding high and safe in favour, would not suffer him to approach White Hall! Vague

rumours met him on the road; he was accused of this and that; all meaning, as he guessed from hint and shrug, that he was marked like Cranfield, for a scapegoat, to be cursed and driven into the Tower. On reaching Calais he was sure; for no one in that port of passage would convey him to the other side. A spotted man, the skippers whom he sent for shook their heads. They had their orders from the Navy Board. In vain he urged his public mission and produced the King's recall. He could not pass in a royal ship; and an ambassador, returning to his court on leave, was forced to cross the Channel in an open boat. On coming into Dover he was seized, conveyed to London, and committed to the Tower.

Digby was the victim of a hundred falsehoods and a single fact. One fault, apart from his devotion to the match, had set men's tongues against him, and prepared them for his fall:—his having taken Sherborne House from Raleigh's orphans, as a royal gift from James. That house was laden with a curse, and every owner of it, not a churchman, was by heavenly wrath to suffer in his temporal and eternal hopes.

A Norman knight, named Osmund de Seez, who sheathed a warrior's sword to seize a pastor's

staff, was said to have given these noble uplands to the bishop's see, accompanied by a monkish curse on such as should withdraw them from the care of God and Holy Church. This Osmund came to be a saint, and every sinner who assumed his lands was withered from the earth like grass licked up by fire. King Stephen took them, and he fell. King Henry would not add them to his crown. The Montagus, who held them next, were cut off, root and branch. One earl was killed by a mob, another slain in war; and till these lands fell back to Holy Church the Montagus found no peace on earth. For ages they remained in pious hands, until the Lord Protector Somerset, caring for neither saint nor devil, seized them to his use, and lost his head. The next lay-lord was Raleigh, who removed the house to another spot; but could not by his building and his planting lift the curse. On Raleigh's fall they passed to young Prince Henry, who was hardly in possession ere he died. Then Carr obtained them, and was cast into the Tower. No man, it seemed, could enter Sherborne and defy St. Osmund's spell. But public feeling, while it clothed itself in legends, called for blight and murrain to descend on all who snatched the

widow's portion and the orphan's bread. The King had wished to give these lands to Villiers, but the young comedian would not risk both public censure and the wrath of Heaven. When Digby was rewarded for his service with a peerage, Sherborne House and Park were given to him by the King. For Digby laughed at legends, and he took those uplands, with the curse upon their smiling face.

If Heaven forgot St. Osmund's words, England was mindful of Lady Raleigh's claims. This property was her only stay; and Digby, as the spoiler of her children, was pursued with execrations deep and loud. When Digby fell into disgrace, the taverns and exchanges rang with brave hurrahs. Men heard with no surprise, no pity, that this spoiler of the widow was committed to the Tower. Yet Buckingham was not flint, and, after some few weeks of trouble, Digby was allowed to quit his room in the Lieutenant's house, and ride away to Sherborne; followed, like the scape-goat, by a nation's curse.

CHAPTER XXIV.

TURN OF FORTUNE.

WHEN Charles succeeded to his throne, the world was all at Buckingham's feet; not only in the Tilt-yard, in the closet, in the Park, but in the Church, the Council, and the courts of law. The new King was as much his creature as the old had been. By bringing on the Gallic match he won the Queen of England and the Queen of France. To Charles he was all in all; so far as any one could be all in all to Charles. He held the royal ear, he moved the royal pen. Through him, and only through him, could the King be reached; could titles, grants, monopolies, commands, be got. A crowd was always at his gate. Proud lords attended on his getting up; fine ladies hung about his walks and drives. Good bishops waited patiently for a smile, and judges in their ermine paled before his frown.

All officers of state were made, unmade, re-

made by him. He struck down Williams at a blow, and set up Coventry in his place. That pluralist had lost his favour, and his services in 'the policy of deception' could not save him. Laud, so welcome to all Catholics, was become the Duke's adviser; for the three great women whom he wished to please were Catholics — his wife, his mother, and his queen. Williams, once again at fault, was saucy to his Grace. 'I mean to stand on my own legs,' he said. 'If that be so,' replied his Grace, 'look you stand fast.' Williams was forbidden to appear at Council and to use the Seal. On finding that his fall was near, he begged the King to send some lord of his Council to receive the Seals. But Charles would not allow him so much grace. Four peers, the greatest in this realm, had been appointed to wait on Bacon and receive the Seals from him. But Williams was not Bacon, and the King sent Suckling, his Comptroller of the Household, who discharged his errand rudely, telling the fallen Lord-Keeper that his disgrace was due for his unthankfulness to the Duke! When Coventry showed a little spirit, he was promptly warned. 'Who made you Lord-Keeper?' 'The King,' said Coventry, starting back. 'Tis false!' ex-

claimed the Duke; 'I made you; and you shall find that I who made you can and will unmake.'

The Church was no less subject to his will. Bishops and primates rose and fell as he inclined; and when the venerable Abbott, strong in learning and in popularity, refused to be his vassal, Buckingham had the insolence to set a mean dependant on to say in public that his Grace the Duke would drive his Grace the Primate from his throne. 'I own no master save the King,' said Abbott; but the Duke thought otherwise, though he had to bide his time. Laud, now advanced from his poor Welsh see to the Chapel Royal and the diocese of Bath and Wells, assisted in the room of Williams at the coronation, took his seat on the Privy Council, acted as confessor to the Duke, who meant him to succeed the Primate when the primacy should fail. Abbott was old and sickly, worn with gout and stone, confined to his bed at Croydon, and unable to attend the court. An accident had deprived him, for a moment, of such feeble strength as sickness left him. Shooting at a buck, he shot a man. 'It might have happened to an angel,' said the poor old King; but Charles was of another mind; and those who hated the Archbishop for his English views declared that

one who had stained his hands with blood, however spilled, could not officiate in the Church.

And yet, when Fortune seemed to smile on Villiers most, her face was darkening into sudden storm. All England was awaking from her sleep; the truth was coming out like dawn. Such men as felt no wish to mingle in the fray and take their chance of falling with the Duke—it might be, with the King—were looking carefully to their nests. With Yorkshire prudence, Calvert had sold his place of Secretary for six thousand pounds and the Irish barony of Baltimore; a barony which he was free either to keep or sell. He kept it, giving the Irish name of Baltimore to the chief town of his Catholic plantation, now removed from Newfoundland to the Chesapeake; and called by him Maryland, in honour of the young French Queen. Conway had secured himself a seat in the Upper House. Sir Henry Marten was become 'a popular man,' a friend of Eliot, and a member for the borough of St. Germans. Some of the Undertakers failed to keep their seats, and Digges and Phelips were burning to assail the court. Even Digby was uneasy in his spell-bound cage. When he was liberated from the Tower, it was understood by Buckingham that he

was to live at Sherborne and to hold his tongue. But Digby could not hold his tongue. A man of parts, who lived behind the scenes, and knew a hundred things which people yearned to know, was always tempted to deny his bond. Some facts came out. A world, which Williams would no longer lead astray, began to hear of the Escorial oath, of Charles's letter to Pope Gregory, of the proxy left in Digby's hands. The days of deception were about to close. The public were to learn the worst, and then . . . no man could say what then!

On all sides there was failure to atone. The Duke had ordered Laud—at least Laud wrote so—to prepare for changes in the Church, by drawing up a list of clergymen for Charles's use, in which the Puritans were to be marked with a letter P, the Orthodox with a letter O. These 'Puritans' were the English pastors who desired a simple form of worship and a popular spirit in the Church; these 'Orthodox' were the Romanizers who desired a gorgeous ritual, a celibate clergy, and a priestly spirit in the Church. Laud's Puritans were to be crushed, his Orthodox clergy to be set on high. These doings brought no peace to England and to Charles.

Some show of carrying on the war for which they had got supplies was made by King and Duke. A fleet was sent to sea; a dozen regiments were put on board; but fleet and troops returned from Spain without having struck a blow; the men declaring that their officers would not fight. The spells of Calvert lay upon the royal fleet.

Nor had the Duke less cause for worry in his family than in his public place. His wife's reversion to her Church had hurt him much, and Charles was not quite blind to this discredit of his friend; but blame fell far more heavily on his mother than on his wife. The Parent was an Anglican by birth; and after all that had been done for her by James, her falling from the gospel was an insult to the Crown. Her faith was not yet fixed, and neither Laud nor Fisher could be sure of her. When told that she must either give up court or give up mass, she tossed her nose into the sky. When told that if she went to church and took the bread and wine, she would be paid two thousand pounds, she instantly obeyed the call. One day 'Pope' Laud was all in all; next morning Father Fisher had regained his rule. Cupidity completed what apostasy commenced. A chain which had belonged to Anne was given by Charles

to his kinswoman, the Duchess of Lennox, and hung upon her neck with his own royal hands. The Parent was annoyed. If costly chains were to be given away, she thought herself the lady of all others to receive such gifts; and with a greed and impudence not easy of belief, she sent an officer to the Duchess to demand the chain. His Majesty, this officer was to say, desired to have his chain again; he would replace it to the Duchess by some other gift; but in the meantime she must send it back. Amazed and hurt, the Duchess asked this messenger if he himself had heard the King say that? No, said the man; he brought his message from the Countess of Buckingham; the Countess, he supposed, had heard it from the King. 'Then tell her,' said the Duchess, 'that I shall not so dishonour the prince who brought it as to suffer it to be carried back by any other hand than his or than my own.'

His Parent quarrelled with his wife, and with his wife's proud kinsfolk. She had feuds with Lady Rutland and with Lady Hatton. Pride and greed were her besetting sins. Her pride embroiled her with the Queen, from whom she strove, supported by her son, to exact the courtesies of an equal. Once, when Henrietta was too busy to return

a call, the Duke intruded into her room and went so far as to exclaim, 'You shall repent it.' Henri's daughter was not used to threats; she gave him word for word; and when she turned upon him in her anger, he was fool enough to bawl, 'There have been Queens in England who have lost their heads.' The Parent made him wretched, much as she had made Sir Thomas wretched. Few of her ventures had been crowned with true success. She and her husband had to live apart. George had been blighted by his marriage. Susan was not happy in her lot; and Kit was miserable; and John was mad.

No scandals of that scandalous time had startled London more than the affairs of Viscount Purbeck and Frances Coke. For Frances made the fool a perfectly wicked wife. She ran away from him; she dressed in male attire; she strutted in the Park with sword and plume; she roystered with her gallants in St. Paul's. She made a compact with his 'devil'—that Dr. Lamb who had striven, before their marriage, to uncloud her husband's wits with potions and enchantments; and this rogue supplied her, at a price, with philtres, sorceries, and magic dolls; all which she tried, not only on her husband, but the Duke. When Vil-

liers quarrelled with the Howard family, she cast her eyes on Robert, one of the sons of Lady Suffolk, and induced that flighty youth to fall in love. When Lamb was tried at the Court of King's Bench for rape, she drove to see him in his prison; going to him openly, to seek his help. No long time afterwards she became a mother; and, as every one knew that her child was not Lord Purbeck's son, the question of his peerage and the right of his succession rose. Poor Purbeck, hot with shame, then offered, as a lesser evil, to adopt her child; but Lady Purbeck, in her wicked temper, swore that the boy was young Sir Robert's boy. This matron of twenty-three astounded Lady Suffolk, schooled as she was in every form of vice; and Lady Suffolk, fearing the consequences of such female frankness on her son, threw out some hints that Robert, from his state of health, could not have been the father of that starless child.

Committed to the custody of Sir Edward Barkham, Alderman of Cheape, who took her most reluctantly into his house, Lady Purbeck was carried by that magistrate to Serjeants' Inn, where the Lord Chief Justice and the Judges were attending to attest her story. 'What have you old

cuckolds to say to me?' was Lady Purbeck's greeting. Ley replied, that she was charged with using demoniacal charms upon her husband and the Duke. The facts, he told her, were confessed by her accomplice, Dr. Lamb. And what he said was true. That necromancer, in his eagerness to save his neck, had turned on his adopted 'daughter,' and, believing he should please the Duke, confessed the catalogue of her crimes. She laughed at Lamb, and mocked at Ley. The Lord Chief Justice dared not recommend his patron to proceed against her in a criminal court for witchcraft, since the proof of her offence would lie with Dr. Lamb; a wretch, who was not only known as the Duke's 'devil,' but was lying under sentence of death for rape. Buckingham had to rest content with trying her in a spiritual court. Sir Robert Howard, as a member of the House of Commons, would not plead; and when the Duke complained of him, Sir Robert sent a friend to tell him that his sword was of such and such a length. Buckingham would not fight. The spiritual court made haste to satisfy his anger. Howard was excommunicated from a church of which he was not a member. Lady Purbeck was condemned to stand—a modern Jane Shore—in a white

sheet, at morning service, in the doorway of Savoy Church!

Purbeck was such a fool that, even after Lamb's incantations and confessions, he was willing to receive his wife. His Parent and his ducal brother wished him to be divorced; he would not hear of such a thing. He would have lived with Lady Purbeck, even with Sir Robert in the house. The family got sick of him at last; they sent him beyond the sea; and in a short time heard, without surprise, that his intellect was completely wrecked.

CHAPTER XXV.

ELIOT ELOQUENT.

'DOWN with the Duke!' was heard on every side. His sorcerer Lamb, condemned for rape, received a royal pardon, and was now at large; but popular fury rose against him, as it rose against his patron; and this fury of the people was distinguished by a new and ominous cry for blood.

'Who rules the King? The Duke. Who rules the Duke? The Devil.' Such were the terms of a placard which was one day posted on the City gates. The devil was Dr. Lamb; and these three names—of Charles, of Villiers, and of Lamb,—were daily linked together in the popular cries, the popular placards, and the popular songs.

One Samuel Turner, a lady's doctor, serving as a member for Shaftesbury, sparkled into momentary fame. This doctor, whom fine ladies paid and patronised for feeble jokes, got up in his place and asked six questions, on the ground of

public fame :—(1) Whether the fact of Buckingham being Lord Admiral had not caused the loss of our royalty in the Narrow Seas? (2) Whether the unreasonable gifts to him and his family had not caused the crown to be so poor? (3) Whether the many offices held by him and by his kin were not the cause of bad government? (4) Whether his own connivance, and the fact of his mother and his father-in-law being Papists, were not the support of recusants in general? (5) Whether the sale of honours, offices, and places in both law and church, was not by him, and for his profit? (6) Whether he, by staying at home, and giving wrong orders, had not caused the recent losses by sea and land? A sudden tumult filled the House. 'Such words,' the courtiers yelled, 'were treason. Who had said these things in public?' Turner, much surprised at the effect of what he seemed to have thought a harmless sarcasm, answered that he took them up from common rumour. 'Rumour!' cried the courtiers, 'is no ground to go on.' But much stronger men than Turner sprang into the front. Wentworth, Lyttleton, and Noy, averred that public fame was a sufficient accuser; and Eliot, who had probably drawn the queries put by Turner, cited the case of William de la

Pole, the first Duke of Suffolk, in the reign of Henry the Sixth, in support of the doctrine that a Duke might be accused by public fame, and censured by the House of Commons. Eliot was become the leader of debate; and in a splendid piece of historical criticism turned the weapon of Impeachment on the Duke.

Eliot had tried to save him; tried at Oxford tried again in London; not by covering his public crimes, but by withdrawing him to that popular ground which he had occupied in their younger days. But neither Charles nor Villiers could perceive the danger yet; although events occurred which would have startled men less blind. Arundel, with a view to the restoration of his ducal honours, had contrived a union of his eldest son, Henry Lord Maltravers, with the Lady Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Esmé, Duke of Lennox. Esmé was the King's cousin, and his daughter was a member of the reigning house. To marry her without the King's consent was an offence of high presumption and suspicion. Were they never to have done with these ambitious projects of the Howard family? Charles, in his passion, caused the offenders to be seized while Parliament was sitting. Lord and Lady Maltravers were confined in

Lambeth, Lord and Lady Arundel in the Tower —illegally, as Charles and his ministers were soon to learn. Bishop Williams, whom the Duke had driven from place, got up in the House of Peers, and bade the Lords take notice of an empty seat. It was Lord Arundel's seat; that nobleman was absent; where was he? Arrested—in the Tower! How could a lord of Parliament, not yet condemned by judgment of his peers, be absent from his place? It was a question of their right; and they would do no business until Arundel should be there. The King got angry, but the peers were firm; and after three months had been lost in quarrels, Charles had to yield, and Arundel came back with laurels on his brow.

Lamb came, as it was thought, to Buckingham's help, by diabolical means. When this debate was high, the members were excited by a sudden noise outside, and, running to their windows, saw a marvellous sight. A mist lay thick upon the Thames; the waters boiled and rushed; and out of them arose a circular mass of storm, which lashed against the stairs, the walls, and bulwarks of York House. It lashed and roared in vain; and then, to the surprise of all beholders, rose from the earth, like smoke

ascending from a fire, and spread and lost itself in the higher air. When all this tempest cleared away, the sorcerer himself was noticed on the river in a boat—the master-spirit at his unholy spells.

Two years of silence wore out Digby's patience, and, while Arundel was lying in the Tower a prisoner, Digby asked permission from his peers to charge the Duke of Buckingham with high crimes and misdemeanours. The Duke retorted through Sir Robert Heath, Attorney-general, with a counter-charge of treason against Digby. But the peers, instead of siding with his Grace, resolved that both these charges should be heard.

Digby made out his case; Villiers broke down completely; and the King was so much vexed, that he committed Digby to the Tower a second time.

But sending Digby to the Tower could not undo the work that he had done. Some portion of the truth was told; and now the voice of England swelled into one earnest cry. Had Villiers worked with Gondomar for the Prince's journey into Spain, in order to his conversion? Had the Duke, when acting for the Prince as an ambassador, yielded to the Spaniards on the point of faith? Eliot gave such voice to this indignant cry, as England had till then but rarely heard.

He pointed to the Duke; he pointed to his creature Laud. A secret committee, of which Eliot, Glanville, Selden, Pym, and Digges, were members, met with locked doors, to draw up articles of impeachment against the Duke. These articles were accepted by the House, and Eliot was appointed to conclude the evidence and demand a judgment from the peers. The speech then made by Eliot is the highest flight of eloquent denunciation in the English tongue. He likened Buckingham to Sejanus. He referred to his pride, his lust, his avarice, his revenge. 'My lords,' he ended, 'I have done. You see the man!'

The King, who had been to the House, to read some foolish words set down for him by Laud, and gone away, returned on hearing of this speech; a speech to shake the court, as it afterwards shook the world. 'He means me for Tiberius,' murmured Charles; and Charles for once had not deceived himself.

While Charles was speaking to the Lords, a royal officer strode down to the House of Commons, called out Digges and Eliot to the lobby, seized them by force as prisoners, put them into a barge, and carried them to the Tower.

Some time elapsed ere this arrest was known

to the other members; but when Eliot had been gone some time, inquiries were commenced; and then a whisper spread along the benches that their eloquent brother had been flung into that ominous cell in which the Princes had been slain. They instantly cried '*Rise!*' Pym tried to soothe the members; but they answered, '*Rise!*' No other cry was heard but—'*Rise!—Rise!*' They rose until next day. A stupor seemed to seize all minds. Men stood in groups, without a word being said. All cheeks were pale, all faces sad. Next day, the Speaker, rising in his chair, was met by two stern words—'*Sit down!*' He rose again. '*Sit down!*' the members cried. In vain Finch begged them to proceed. 'No business till this wrong has been set right.' They sat in silence; sat in silence long. At length, Sir Dudley Carlton, now Vice-chamberlain, rose to speak, and what he said compelled the House to listen; for he told them, as a man who knew court secrets, what, in case of their disputing with the King and Duke, they had to dread. All other countries once had Parliaments; the Kings of these countries had put them down. The same, he said, would come to pass in England if they vexed the King.

Digges, who had been arrested by mistake, was freed next day; but Eliot was too great and grave an enemy to release. His words were flying over England like a cry of war; and every artifice that Coventry and his lawyers could invent, was used to draw him deeper in the toils. They threw him into Overbury's cell. Sir Randall Crewe, Chief Justice, and Sir Robert Heath, Attorney-general, went to the Tower, and in the council-room of Apsley's house, they questioned Eliot on a dozen points. With whom had he talked of Kings being forced to yield? With none. With whom had he talked about deposing Kings? With none. From whom had he got his precedent in the reign of Richard the Second? From Raleigh's 'Dialogues between a Councillor and Justice of the Peace.' Who gave him a treatise on depriving Kings? No one. What speeches had he held with the deputies from Rochelle? No speeches. Was he at Gray's Inn on Sunday, who were his companions there, and what had they said? He had not been at Gray's Inn for seven years. What conference had he held with foreign agents? None. The King's Attorney was completely foiled. This prisoner in the Tower had nothing to conceal, and little to

explain. The case was one of violated law; and Charles had just been warned what comes of violated law by his defeat in the Upper House. No burgess could be legally arrested while a Parliament was sitting, save for high treason; and as nothing tending towards a charge of treason could be found against Eliot, Charles and the Duke were forced, reluctantly, to order his discharge.

Buckingham, now more firmly pressed by his impeachers, made his answer in a form set down by Laud and Hyde. That answer raised a tempest in the Commons; and the King, who swore he would never abandon George, dissolved the House. In future, he would reign alone; he and his friend; with their adviser, Laud.

Eliot, as their foremost enemy, was involved in suits about his patent of Vice-Admiral. A dirty dog, named Bagg, was set to worry him; and when every other means of ruining him had failed, he was arrested on a frivolous charge, confined in the Gate-house, and removed from his command in the western ports.

The Duke now ruled alone; assisted in his private hours by the advice of Laud and Lamb. He tried a loan; but no one, save the courtiers, were disposed to lend. Lords Warwick, Essex, Say, Clare, Lincoln, Bolingbroke, declined on

public grounds to lend their money; a refusal that was promptly followed up in every shire. The question was debated in the King's own presence, whether these six lords should not be sent, as an example, to the Tower? The Council was divided in opinion, and the lords were saved by a majority of two. Williams—who would not lend—was not so lucky as the temporal peers. The Duke was vexed with him on other grounds, and most of all for rescuing Arundel from his grasp. On a suspicion of his having spoken in his see against the loan, the pluralist was taken in the country, brought to London, and committed to the Tower.

Abbott, the Lord Primate, was suspended in his office for refusing to license a sermon preached by Sibthorp, one of Laud's divines, affirming that a Christian man was bound to submit in all things to his prince. Sibthorp contended that a good Christian was bound to lend the King his money; and the Primate's refusal of his license was regarded as a condemnation of the loan.

But days of strife were not in Buckingham's mood. He wanted plays, masques, dances, feasts, and cockfights. To receive the King and Queen at Chelsea House; to lounge in the Tilt-yard with a pretty woman; to compare the books of

fashion and invent new styles of dress; to show the Doge's minister how to bait a lion; to confer with Lamb about his imps and stars; to read the last new sonnet in his praise:—all these were his delights; not struggles, warrants, and impeachments; racks, chains, courts of justice, and the headsman's axe.

A loan having failed him, Villiers thought of war. Success in war would cover up all sins; and, as the country clamoured for an expedition to Rochelle, he raised an army and equipped a fleet. A hundred vessels sailed from Portsmouth; but the Huguenots, who knew their man, refused him leave to come into their port. They told him he must fight elsewhere. He landed on the Isle of Oleron, and failed.

On his return to England, broken and disgraced, he was received with murmurs, not unmixed with threats. A mob surrounded York House gates, and ominous cries were heard through windows in White Hall. 'A Parliament!' was shouted in every street, in every town; and Charles, in doubt and debt on every side, was fain to hearken to these cries, to sign the writs for new elections and to order the liberation of his prisoners.

Eliot left the Gate-house; Digby and Williams left the Tower. Yet Charles, though calling up these babblers, would not trust them for a day; and when they met again, he meant to be their master, not in name and courtesy, but in force and fact. In Paris he had seen the King surrounded by a foreign guard. In France he heard that parliaments had been reduced into obedience by that King, who held his state by means of a Swiss and Scottish guard. He, too, would have a foreign guard, and by that foreign guard would keep unruly souls in order. Conway was empowered by Charles to send out thirty thousand pounds to Colonel Dalbier and Colonel Balfour, two free-lances, then in Flanders, out of work, to purchase arms and horses for this guard. The mercenary force was to consist of a thousand cavalry, five hundred foot. With such an army at his back, the King felt certain that the Parliament of England might become a Parliament of France.

This foreign guard was not yet raised when Parliament met, and under Eliot's inspiration framed that great Remonstrance, in which Bishop Laud was denounced as unsound in faith, and the Duke of Buckingham was delivered, as an enemy of the kingdom, to his frightful doom.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FELTON'S KNIFE.

THE Duke had grown too great to live. All passions swayed against him; passions noble and legitimate, passions ignoble and illegitimate; from those of men who looked to crush him by a public judgment of his peers, to those of men who edged against him an assassin's knife.

A change was creeping on him day by day; and every new year found him a richer and baser man. His charm of manner was the last to go; but charm of manner means some goodness of the heart; and perfect style is never to be kept by men of selfish minds. The generous mood was gone. A youth who had been soft with men, was now becoming harsh with women; and a keen observer noticed, as a sign of fallen nature, that this son of a country knight would keep great ladies waiting in his ante-room while he sat playing with his dogs.

In dealing with the Howards he had caught some portion of their greed. The dross began to stick, the stain began to sink. From them he heard what profits could be made in such a place as his; how every favour could be sold for money; and how easily the buyers of his favour could be cheated of their due. From them he learned to take rich presents, and to mock the dupes who brought them when it served him to refuse his pledge. In brief, he was become a moral wreck.

His fortunes would have turned a wiser and an older head. He held the highest rank his sovereign could confer. He wore the Garter; he was Master of the Horse; he was a Privy Councillor; he was Chief Justice in Eyre, both north and south of Trent; he was Steward of Hampton Court; he was Lord Lieutenant of Bucks; he was Constable of Windsor Castle; he was Chancellor of Cambridge; he was Lord High Admiral; he was General of the Forces; he was Constable of Dover; he was Warden of the Cinque Ports. His kinsmen, near and distant, were ennobled. John, his elder brother, was Viscount Purbeck; Kit, his younger brother, was Earl of Anglesea; his mother was a Countess in her own right; his

sister's husband was created Earl of Denbigh. All his kindred were advanced to honour. Thomas Beaumont was made a baronet; John Butler, who had married his half-sister, Bess, was made a baronet and peer; William, his elder half-brother, was made a baronet; and Sir Edward, the younger, just escaped a coronet by his untimely death.

Clerks and attorneys had been raised to the peerage as a recompense for marrying his kith and kin. Cranfield was made Earl of Middlesex for wedding Anne Brett; Ley was made Earl of Marlborough for wedding Jane Butler. Montagu, who gave his son Edward (Cromwell's master in the art of war) in marriage to Susan Hill, the Duke's kinswoman, received as his reward the Earldom of Manchester. Compton, who gave his son, Sir Spencer, in marriage to Mary Beaumont, the Duke's cousin, received as his reward the Earldom of Northampton. Richardson, who married Elizabeth Ashburnham, the Duke's aunt, was raised to the bench as Lord Chief Justice; and his wife was made a baroness of Scotland, with the title of Lady Cramond, and remainder to his eldest son.

Some leaders in the new Parliament—Eliot,

Pym, Coke, Selden, and some others—met at Sir Robert Cotton's house; and, after much debate, resolved to put off the Impeachment, as a personal matter, and proceed to frame and pass a Bill of Rights. This Bill was not to raise new claims, but only to assert and classify the ancient liberties of this Commonwealth. The King, alarmed by such a movement of the leaders, turned for counsel to a man whom he disliked. Williams had helped him once in hour of need; and, threatened with a Bill of Rights, he sent for Williams to his closet, and consulted him again. Williams, having kissed the royal hands, spoke privately with the Duke. He took upon himself to see and manage those who were engaged upon this Bill of Rights. Like Charles, 'Pope' Laud was for a policy of resistance; meeting the Bill at once, and throwing it out by a majority of votes; but Williams, not being able to count those votes, and not being sure they would suffice to throw it out, proposed to win his game by wit and not by force. His new plan, like his old plan, was a policy of deceit. He was never to be seen at court; he was to pass for a man disgraced; he was to court the people and their leaders; he was to gain the name of an earnest

advocate for this Bill of Rights; and when the moment came, he was to use the power this advocacy would give him, to emasculate the Bill. All this was done with signal guile. The Commons trusted him; the Peers affected to regard him as a 'popular' man; and when the Bill came up, he took on all great points the views expressed by Eliot, Coke, and Pym. In this sense only he pretended to suggest his saving clause. 'We present this our humble petition to your Majesty, with the care not only of preserving our own liberties, but with due regard to leave entire that sovereign power wherewith your Majesty is trusted for the protection, safety, and happiness of the people,' were the words he asked permission to insert; a phrase which gave away the very liberties it affected to preserve! His cunning spent itself in vain. 'Leave him a sovereign power!' cried Alford, when this clause was read in the House of Commons; 'how can we leave him that which he never had?' 'We ask for no new thing,' said Wentworth; 'and from this petition we will not recede, in either whole or part.' The Bishop's cunning was defeated, and the House struck out his 'saving clause.'

At once the King showed fight. The House of Lords, in which he had enlarged his party by creating some new peers, opposed the Commons; and the war of motions, conferences, and intrigues, led on to two events—a proud denunciation of the Duke by Eliot as the Great Delinquent, and the last apostasy of Wentworth from the popular cause.

Never had Eliot reached such height and force of eloquence as he now attained. His speech was like a call to judgment, and a knell of doom. Adopted, printed, scattered through the land, this speech, and the Remonstrance founded on it, raised the whole country like a cry of war. To save his ministry the King dissolved. He caused proposals to be made to Wentworth, who had proved in these debates, but too abundantly, his power to make and mar; and Wentworth, even while the Bill of Rights was still unvoted, passed over from the popular to the royal side. 'I have left you,' he observed to Pym. 'So I perceive,' replied that sturdy tribune; 'but *we* shall never leave you, so long as you have a head on your shoulders.' It was coming fast to heads! 'Pope Laud' might yet be saved for years, but neither dissolution nor concession would avail

the Duke. All arms were raised against him, and the only question was the time and manner of his fall. Most people wished the Great Delinquent to be fairly tried, decorously condemned, and publicly put to death. But these solemnities were not to be. The golden upstart was to perish, not like Dudley, not like Essex, with the pomps and sceneries of a soldier's death, but like a knave who is mobbed and murdered in a mutinous camp.

A warning came to him, when Lamb, his 'devil,' was set upon and killed in the public street. This rogue was leaving the Fortune playhouse for a tavern in the City, when a mob of 'prentice lads perceived him, and began to hoot and yell. The necromancer fled before them, running towards Cheapside; the lads ran after him, shouting, 'Witch, witch! Devil, devil!' Lamb met some sailors, whom he paid to thrash these lads. A battle opened, and the sailors, few in number, ran. The City blood was up; the lads now pelted Lamb with stones, and drove him, seeking shelter, to the Windmill public-house; a tavern in Old Jewry, where the vintner took him in. Such shelter could not save the necromancer now. The Windmill was surrounded,

back and front; the mob was going to pull it down; and then, to save his house, the landlord tossed his 'devil' into the street. Lamb got into a second door; but followed by the mob, he was again expelled. Once more he darted from his foes; once more he flew into an open house; once more he was dragged out by force. A thousand hands were on him. 'Where is your master, devil?' they exclaimed; 'if he were here, we would do as much for him.' No help was given to Lamb by man or maid; all decent people fled from him; and his tormentors left him on the ground for dead. Conveyed into the Compter prison, he was laid upon a pallet, where he bled to death. Folk said that night in every street, 'The devil is dead.'

On that same night, the Duke's portrait, hanging in the obsequious Court of High Commission, tumbled from the wall!

Too angry to be wise, the King sent messengers to the Mansion House, in which he threatened to withdraw the City charters, as a punishment for this public crime. 'Let the Duke look to it, or he will be served as his doctor was served,' a second warning ran. More anger brought fresh threats from Charles; and these

again were answered by a third prophetic note upon the City gates:

> 'Let Charles and George do what they can,
> Yet George shall die like Doctor Lamb.'

And in a loose sense, so it was to be.

All other means of getting on being spent, the Duke resolved to win back popular support by making show of war. Rochelle was calling to her English friends for help, and M. de Soubise, the Duc de Fontenoy, was now in England, pressing for support. A fleet was therefore gathered in the Thames, an army mustered in Gosport and Farnham, on pretence of going to her relief. The Duke had no design to fight; it is not certain that he meant to sail. King Charles cared little for the Huguenots; but they were useful to him; and should their city fall, as he was sure it must, he was prepared to put on mourning for the loss. What James had suffered for Ostend, his son could suffer for Rochelle!

The army and the fleet were in a higher mood. They wished to fight the Cardinal Richelieu, as their sires had fought the Cardinal Albrecht. Copies of the Remonstance, and reports of Eliot's

speech, were passed from hand to hand, from lip to lip throughout the fleets and camps. 'An Enemy of the Kingdom' was to lead them on. Could such a man be trusted with their lives? They feared, too, that the Duke had some base motive for this show of war. Not many of the troops were armed; and few of them had shoes and socks! A troop of Irish—wild and lawless kernes—had come into the country, and were pillaging the farmsteads night and day. These kernes were part of that foreign guard which Charles was anxious to enlist; and, from their first appearance in the Hampshire lanes, they acted more like enemies in a conquered country, than like soldiers of the crown. Milk-maids and plough-boys set upon them; farmers refused to lodge them; and the King was driven to interpose. On all sides jealousy and strife broke out. At Gosport, some of the soldiers mutinied; a fight ensued; and four of the men were killed. Great numbers of arrests were made. A regiment on the march through Botley came to blows with the townfolk, one of whom they slew, and many of whom they hurt. The mariners were like the troops. At Dover and the lesser ports they rose against the press-men and refused to

serve, pretending that the warrants were not stamped, as usual, with the Castle seal. At Spithead, a sailor-lad 'insulted' Villiers, who arrested him. His shipmates gathered round the house in which he was confined, and the offending lad was yielded to these seamen for the sake of peace. When Charles rode down with the Duke to Deptford, to inspect the ships, he murmured, 'George, there be some that wish both these and thou may perish; care not for them; we will perish together, if thou dost.' Perish they would, and in one cause; though not together, as the King foretold.

Lamb had impressed the Duke with a belief that fate had tied their lives up in a mystic knot. 'If I survive,' the Sorcerer said, 'the Duke will live.' And now that Sorcerer was dead! 'Were it not better,' asked Throgmorton, on the eve of starting for the army, 'that you wear a secret shirt of mail?' Men marching to their fate are blind; and Villiers, turning to his cautious friend, exclaimed, 'There are no Roman spirits left.'

Before he rode from London, Villiers tried once more to put his confessor, Laud, in the Primate's place; but Abbott stood upon his right,

as head of the English Church; and Charles was not yet ripe for such a deed as forcing an Archbishop to resign his staff.

A low brick house, two stories high, the property of Captain Mason, Paymaster of the Forces, standing in the main street of Portsmouth, had been hired for the Duke; and this low house was crowded, on the morning of Saturday, August 23, 1628, with troops of lords and ladies; Admirals, Generals, Secretaries, the young Duchess, Lady Anglesea, and other dames of rank. A coach was waiting at the door. Lord Dorchester had just arrived from court, and Villiers, with a joyful face, was starting to see the King. Good news, he said, had come by post; Rochelle had been relieved by land; no need remained for him to sail. But M. de Soubise, well knowing this good news was false, came over from his lodgings to Mason's house, and was in high words with the Duke; protesting that if England meant to save Rochelle, the fleet must sail, and sail without delay.

This noise within the house was deepened by a noise without. A press of sea-folk roared along the streets, abusing Villiers, calling him a tyrant and a murderer; for the previous day, on coming

to Portsmouth, he had seized the lad who insulted him, caused him to be tried, and on the finding of a drum-head court, condemned him to be hung. A press of sailors set upon the guards; these guards discharged their pieces; and the town was hot with battle, when the Duke slashed in among them with two hundred sabres, drove the rioters to port, and forced them to seek refuge in their ships. Two men were killed, and heaps lay wounded on the ground. But Buckingham's bad blood was up; he seized a leader of the crews; and ere he supped, he had that leader tried, condemned to death, and hung in company with the luckless lad.

The Duke was but too well aware that going on board the fleet was hardly safe for him. The French prince got excited; but the Duke was deaf, his coach was ready, and his gentlemen were mounting in the street. A group of officers streamed out; some walking off, some leaping to their seats. The Duke was following close, when, in a narrow passage, darker than the hall, he stopped and reeled. Lord Cleveland, who was near him, heard a thud, and then a voice cry, 'God have mercy on thy soul!' The Duke bent backward; uttered a faint scream of 'Villain'

tore from his breast a knife, a common tenpenny knife, and staggering, swooned and fell. Red blood was oozing from his mouth; his eyes were filming over; and the flutter of his heart was stopped. The Duke was dead.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AN ASSASSIN.

As the Duke reeled backward, screaming 'Villain!' his adherents, who had heard the passionate language of Soubise, and thought the Huguenot prince had struck him, raised the shout, 'A Frenchman! A Frenchman!' and a hundred swords flashed out. But while they sought the Prince a small, dark man, an officer, bareheaded, sword in hand, attired in dusty clothes, came out from a door into the open court, and cried, 'I am the man!'

All faces turned upon him. 'Here I am!' the dark, bareheaded officer exclaimed, and yielded up his sword.

Examined by the councillors present, he avowed his deed, as one to which he had received a call from Heaven. He was an instrument, his act a sacrifice. 'His name?' 'John Felton.' 'His profession?' 'Soldier.' Felton had served his

country in her wars; served her in Flanders, on the Rhine, and in the Isle of Rhé. Some pay was due to him; a company was also due to him; but he protested that his personal wrongs had not inspired him with a wish to kill the Duke. A patriot, he had read the Remonstrance, stigmatizing his commander as a public enemy; and a Voice had called on him to execute that judgment of the court. No one had set him on; no mortal man was privy to his thought. It was the Voice, and nothing but the Voice. A public enemy had been pointed out. A guilty magnate had defied the law; and justice was about to fail on earth. A higher Power than man had called upon him. He had taken the task of vengeance on himself. In killing Buckingham he had done his duty, and he hoped to win and wear a martyr's crown.

The Lords then told him Villiers was not dead. His dark face lighted with a flush. Not dead! 'That stroke had killed him,' said the practised swordsman, 'though he had been dressed in mail.' His hat, which he had lost in the crowd, was found. Within the lining was a paper, with a writing, in the prisoner's hand, declaring that he bore no malice to the Duke, although he had

suffered some private wrongs from him; but that he was about to slay a public enemy, denounced as such by name, and by the highest lawful court—the Parliament of England.

Charles, who heard the news while he was kneeling at his morning prayers, assumed that Felton must have an accomplice; and he hinted, in no dubious form, that he could tell the lords who that accomplice was. He pointed to the eloquent tribune who had branded Villiers as the Great Delinquent, and delivered him up to public judgment with that terrible sign, 'You see the man!'

Charles took his ground at once, that Eliot was the cause of Buckingham's death, and from that ground he never could be got to move. In all his public acts he showed this working of his mind. He ordered that the murderer should be sent to London, lodged in the Tower, and questioned by the most unscrupulous tools of Buckingham, his Lord Chief Justice, Richardson, and his Attorney-general, Heath. He started where he meant to end, by ordering Felton to be lodged in Eliot's cell—the Bloody tower.

So soon as news ran round the city that the soldier who had slain the Duke was coming up

to London as a prisoner, crowds went forth to meet and bless him. On the road he heard such cries, as 'Now God bless thee, little David!' In the city he was cheered with shouts from shop and lattice of 'Lord, comfort thee!' Vast multitudes were waiting at the Tower to see him pass, and as he entered, with a martyr's air, 'Lord, bless thee!' broke in sobs from a thousand breasts. All day that multitude kept watch under Raleigh's Walk, and pressed on the Lieutenant's garden to the Bloody tower. To them, this poor assassin was a hero, who had snatched the sword, like Mattathias on the hill of Modin, and delivered his country from a foreign yoke. That night his health was drunk in taverns and in private houses, from the City ditch to Charing Cross; as it was drunk next day, in Oxford, where the freshmen tossed off horns of college ale in envy of so classical a deed! Even in the precincts of White Hall men's eyes were lighted with unusual joy. No one, except the King and two or three women, seemed to have been touched by what had come to pass. Great lords could find some comfort in the crime. A stone of offence, they whispered, was removed; the King and Commonwealth might now get on; and England

would enjoy a term of peace. Good counsels might be heard; brave actions might be dared. Even those who could not drink a murderer's health, were yet inclined to think that out of evil there might spring some good. They saw in these events the hand of God.

That night the name of Felton was on every lip; on some lips it was heard in praise, on more lips it was heard in prayer.

Next day, and afterwards for weeks to come, a crowd assembled under Raleigh's Walk to see their 'Little David,' their 'Deliverer,' while lords and gentlemen were pressing into the Bloody tower to see what kind of man this murderer was.

Low in stature, slight in build, with lowering eyes, pale face, and slouching look, John Felton was the type of a fanatic. One of his fingers had been lopped at the joint, and those who asked him how he came to lose it, started from him, as with unraised voice he told his tragic tale. A neighbour vexed him; he demanded his revenge. This neighbour fancied he was not in earnest; then he chopped his finger off, and sent the piece of bleeding flesh as evidence that he meant to fight. A man to go all lengths when he was vexed, much more when he was

'called' by Heaven! He was an officer in the army, a lieutenant in a company of foot. In Flanders, on the Rhine, before Rochelle, he had served in many camps, and hoped he had done his duty in that cause, which was the cause of God.

Applause ran through the country. Poets sang his praise, and curious idlers turned off anagrams from his name. Townley, the friend of Camden, Gill, the friend of Milton, were conspicuous in these rhymes and riddles. Townley's hymn to the assassin was so fine that Jonson was supposed to have had a share in it. Laud brought rare Ben before the Council, but the Laureate swore the lines were Townley's lines, not his. He knew the writer; he had lately supped with him. Townley was his friend, and he had given a poniard from his girdle to the poet, who was also a divine. Gill was arrested for his rhyme, and Townley fled for refuge to the Hague.

A still more ominous thing occurred. Sir Robert Savage went about in public boasting that he was a friend of Felton, that he helped him in his task, and that he meant, should Felton fail, to have killed the Duke himself. Arrested and examined by the Council, Savage stuck to his tale that he was of the plot. Laud fancied he had

struck a mine, and as a first step to inquiry, Savage was committed to the Tower. But details he had none to give, and Felton, questioned in his turn, declared that he had never seen the man. The jailers put him to a test. Removing Felton from the Bloody tower, and locking some one in his room, they brought in Savage, who at once walked up to the prisoner, shook his hand, and cried, 'How do you do, Mr. Felton?' Savage was removed from the Tower as an impostor; whipped from Fleet Street to Westminster, set in a pillory, shorn of his ears, and branded on the cheek.

Pope Laud, who was the Duke's successor in the royal closet, took from the Lord Chief Justice and the Attorney-general most of the labour of unravelling 'the plot.' Like Charles, he was convinced there was a plot; an irreligious and disloyal plot; a plot connected with the Bill of Rights; and, like his master, he was clear that Felton's comrade in the plot was that eloquent burgess of Parliament who had caused him in a public document to be declared 'unsound' in faith. Laud felt his fate bound up with that of the Duke. One public document had denounced them both. If Buckingham had been named as dangerous to the State, he too was

named as dangerous to the Church. Who could assure him that some new 'deliverer' was not waiting on his steps unseen? If Felton knew that secret he would pluck it from him, if he tore out life as well. The rack should make him speak.

But Laud's ferocity was foiled by Felton's craft. 'You must confess,' cried Laud, 'or go upon the rack.' 'If I am racked, my lord,' said Felton, 'I may happen, in my agony, to accuse your lordship.' Laud was silent for a moment; but he rallied courage, spoke to the King about it, and received his Majesty's commands to have the murderer tortured to the furthest stretch allowed by law. To what extent could it be used by law? Some judges doubted whether torture could be used by law at all. The point must be submitted to the bench; the bench was ordered to consult the rolls, compare decisions, and report to Charles. Their verdict was, that torture could not be applied according to the English law. From that day forward, all the racks, screws, ropes, and hooks, once used as means for getting at the truth, were tumbled from the Council Chamber into holes and passages of the Tower.

What else Laud learned about his prisoner was of personal interest only. He was poor; a brooding, lonely man; not given to speech; a Bible reader, and a Church attendant; loving England much, and hating Rome and Spain with all his soul. He lodged in Fleet Lane, with Thomas Foot, who let his house in single rooms to tenants paying no great share of rent. A woman lodger lent him books; among the rest a 'Life of Mary, Queen of Scots,' which book he kept. He nursed some grudge against the Duke for keeping back his pay, and passing him over when his captain died; but he had never dreamed of doing his General harm, until a month ago, when, walking into a scrivener's shop in Holborn, he had seen a copy of the Remonstrance passed in Parliament, denouncing Villiers as 'a Public Enemy.' He felt a call within him to complete that sentence on his Grace. Not willingly had he obeyed that Voice. For weeks he strove against it, praying in agony of soul that God would spare him such a fearful cup. He could not stay that Voice. He went to the scrivener's shop to read that document again; the copyist, busy at his trade, would only let him read it if he meant to buy. 'Would they not let him read it first?' 'Well: yes.'

A clerk went with him to the Windmill tavern, in Shoe Lane, where he sat reading it, through and through, two hours. Then Felton paid the clerk and took it home; to ponder in the dead of night, with wrestlings of the spirit and in agonies of prayer. Five weeks he pondered on the deed. The Voice still called him, and he answered to his soul that he was ready to obey. Running to the nearest church, he begged that on the following Sunday prayers might be said for him as one who was sore in need. Going forward to Tower Hill, near the place of execution, he bought a tenpenny knife. Taking a slip of paper, he signed his name, wrote the few words already noted on this slip, and pinned the paper in his hat. The rest his Lordship knew.

When he was tried for murder, Heath, the prosecutor, dwelt on the loss his Majesty had suffered in so great and good a man as the Duke. Felton held out his right hand. He was sorry to have slain so good a servant to the King; and bade them hack the hand off that had done this deed!

John Felton died as he had lived; callous, yet devoted; pious, yet impenitent; his fingers red with blood, his brows encircled with a patriot's crown.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NINE GENTLEMEN IN THE TOWER.

No evidence could be found by Laud connecting Eliot, Selden, and their colleagues of the Bill of Rights, with Felton's deed; save only such a passion as in times of public danger drives men into acting under common impulse in their several ways; yet Charles was resolute in his first design of holding these great citizens responsible for the blood that had been shed.

Another Parliament was called; for 'Money—money!' was a cry still coming up from every corner of the court; a hard necessity for Charles, who hated all these babblers in the House of Commons; but with empty pockets and a host of duns, he was compelled, though sorely vexed, to try once more his famous 'policy of deceit.' This Session was a shorter Session than the last. A Session of five weeks only, it was memorable to all after times for two events: for Cromwell's first appearance as a speaker on the

scene of strife, for Wentworth's and Eliot's last commitment to the Tower.

Three Parliaments had been called, three expeditions had been formed, in this short reign. In each a policy of deception had been urged; but this bad policy had failed as signally in the House of Commons as at Cadiz and Rochelle. No heart, and not much brain, were in it; yet the King, too dim of sight to see things in their actual shape and hue, was ready in his need to try 'deceit' once more. He must have funds, and he must have them soon. His ships were rotting in the ports; his troops were shoeless in the camps. No one would lend him a jacobus. Call it tonnage; call it poundage; call it impost; call it benevolence; no one would either give or lend him money. Peer, knight, burgess, equally replied to his collectors, 'Parliament only can impose a tax.' A Parliament was called. But Laud, not Williams, was the King's adviser, and the policy of scapegoats was abandoned for a policy of force and fraud. High tones, bold words, rough deeds—the magic of a royal name, the presence of a faithful bench, the awe of halberdmen and musketeers, the daunting glance of marshalmen and jailers, were the means to be employed.

Some things had recently been done by Wentworth, Laud, and Charles, which set all England in a blaze.

Rochelle had been allowed to fall, even as Ostend had been allowed to fall.

At home affairs had gone from bad to worse. The Bill of Rights had been invaded, and in all its parts; even in the text, which, though in print, had been suppressed by order of the Council, and re-issued in a fraudulent shape. A new rate had been levied on the shippers and merchants, by authority of the crown; and merchants, who refused to pay a tax not levied by a vote of the Commons, had been cast into prison, contrary to law. Divines who had been censured by Parliament, had been taken into royal favour, pardoned their offences by the Crown, and raised to higher places in the Church. Laud had been promoted to the see of London; Montagu had been made Bishop of Chichester; Mainwaring had been rewarded with the rectory of Stamford Rivers. Every man who was obnoxious to the people had been taken up by Charles; so that the Civil War, though not declared in terms, appeared to have commenced in fact.

Before the Houses met, a small committee of

the Council, having Laud for leader, held a secret sitting, and resolved upon their course. In case the question of these rates of tonnage, poundage, and the like, was raised in Parliament, his Majesty would express his willingness to have a parliamentary power to tax the ports. A Bill should be prepared to give him this legal right. If such a Bill were passed, the King should satisfy the country by an affirmation that he owed the money to his people's love. If it were not passed, the King would use his sovereign right, dissolve the Parliament, and raise these taxes by his royal power.

Charles would not pay his mutinous subjects such a compliment as opening Parliament in person. Every one expected strife; and Eliot rose at once to give the national anger voice. Rochelle, he said, had put religion into peril, and involved the country in everlasting shame. He spoke of Buckingham as Achan, and referred to Montagu's promotion as a censure of that House. Selden complained about the Bill of Rights, so scandalously printed by the King's command. A day was given to church affairs; to Neile, to Laud, to Rome, to Babylon; a great day in the session, since a man, not heard of till that moment, but much heard of since, stood up and

said, with loud, unmusical, and earnest utterance, 'he had heard that Dr. Alabaster preached flat Popery at Paul's Cross.' The blunt and earnest speaker, meaning what he said, was Cromwell; henceforth to be counted as a foe of Rome and all who clung to the skirts of Rome.

King Charles was angry. Why this rage, he asked, about religion? He and the Church could take good care of religion. The Commons must go on with business; with his Bill for tonnage and poundage. He insisted on their voting for his Bill. His Bill! men cried in wonder. How could a bill involving grants of money be his Majesty's Bill? Sir John Cooke, the Secretary of State, was ordered to concede that point, if only they would fall to work. To work! They were at work. Affairs going ill abroad, they wished to hold a solemn fast; but Charles, coquetting with his Book of Sports, objected to this holding of a fast, and begged them to discuss his Bill.

To Laud, then trifling with the Articles in a Popish sense, the Commons sent 'a challenge,' in the shape of a Declaration, that all good Churchmen understood the Articles of Religion in the sense adopted by their fathers in the reign of Queen Elizabeth; rejecting that interpretation which was

now being given to them by Jesuits and Arminians. By Jesuits and Arminians they meant Laud and Neile. The House declared that not until they were satisfied in this matter of religion, would they touch the Bill. Eliot, as a Churchman faithful to his creed, denounced as worthless sons of an august parent, hirelings such as Montagu, Laud, and Neile. Sir Dudley Digges, whose 'undertaking' for the court had won him a promise of succession to the Rolls—a manifest job, since Digges was not a member of the bar!—requested Eliot, in a private note, to hold his tongue, as silence would 'advantage' him. Digges had been silent all this session, with 'advantage' of the Rolls (in time); but Eliot was not Digges, and on the eve of dissolution he was ready for his bravest work.

A Declaration had been made by a committee, on which Eliot sat, against the King's right to levy tonnage and poundage; and as Eliot was the chairman of committee, it was known that on the morrow he would ask the House to ratify this Declaration by a vote. A crisis was upon them now; for Charles would not allow the Commons to debate, much less deny, his right to levy rates. But how could Eliot be restrained?

Charles sent for Speaker Finch, and laid his royal will upon him. He was not to put that Declaration to a vote. He was to stop all reference to the subject. If Eliot rose to speak, he was at once, and in the royal name, to adjourn the House. Finch promised to obey.

Some hints of this palace plot to silence and adjourn the House got wind; and when the Speaker took his seat next morning, Denzil Holles, a son of Lord Clare, and Benjamin Valentine, the member for St. Germans, left their benches in the House, and placed themselves on the Speaker's right and left. So soon as prayers were ended, Eliot rose. The Speaker also rose. 'Adjourned for a week,' said Finch—'adjourned by his Majesty's command.' 'Adjourned! That is no message for a Speaker to bring down,' cried some. 'Adjournment lies with the House alone!' cried others. One great call rose up for Eliot to proceed. He rose again; the Speaker also rose again. 'Sit down!' said Holles and Valentine to Finch, and taking him by the arms they pressed him down into his seat. Poor Finch was dumb with fright, and Eliot went on like a fire much fanned by winds, until he ended an address of matchless power, by stepping to the table, and laying his Declaration

down. But Finch, still writhing in his agony, refused to take it up. The clerk was asked to read it; he refused. A crowd of members called for Finch to put the Declaration. Shedding tears, he sobbed, he could not do it; nay, he dared not do it; for his Majesty the King had laid that duty of refusal on him. Selden bade him think a moment. He was their Speaker; he was bound to put all motions to the vote. Poor Finch could say no more. He wept; he wrung his hands; he rose to go. 'Sit down!' cried Holles and Valentine, pressing him back into his chair. 'Disgrace of Kent, and blot on a noble family!' cried Hayman. Hobart, Strode, and Long, got near the Speaker's chair to hold him fast. Some members of the Council — Edmunds, May, and others having seats, came forward in support of Finch; but all those country gentlemen were armed, and seeing hands on sword-hilts, these pacific Councillors fell back. 'God's wounds!' cried Denzil Holles, 'you shall sit here until we please to rise!' Strode called upon the House to vote. 'Let all who wish this Declaration to be read stand up!' The House, with few exceptions, rose. Great uproar followed; Finch made efforts to escape; and members in their fury,

struck each other. Winterton, who stood by Finch, was pushed aside by Coryton, and the elder men were flying from the House in terror, when a messenger came in with news that Charles was waiting in the House of Lords for Finch.

But Finch was now a prisoner in his chair, surrounded by a noble guard, with Denzil Holles at their head. Again his Majesty sent for Finch. Where was he? What kept him back? The King was waiting for the Speaker! But the members could not let him budge one step. A serjeant came to the table and removed the mace. 'The door!' cried many voices—'shut the door!' Miles Hobart rushed upon the serjeant, took from him the mace, and locked the door inside. Then Eliot read an abstract of his Declaration in the midst of wild excitement. Knocks were heard; but Eliot still went on. These knocks grew louder as the fury rose within. Black Rod was waiting with a message from the King. Black Rod was forced to knock and wait. When Eliot finished reading, Holles stood up and read three Resolutions, which he put to the members one by one. (1) 'Whoever seeks to change religion shall be deemed a capital enemy to this commonwealth?' 'Aye, aye!' (2) 'Whoever raises tax

by tonnage and poundage shall be deemed a capital enemy to this commonwealth?' 'Aye, aye!' (3) 'Whoever pays such tax shall be deemed a betrayer of liberty and an enemy of the commonwealth?' 'Aye, aye!'—a hundred times 'Aye, aye!'

Enraged to find the doors were locked, and that his messenger could not enter, Charles despatched an officer for his guards to force the doors; and one of his officers was just come up when Hobart threw them open, and the members, three or four hundred strong, rushed out, with Holles' three Resolutions voted by acclaim. That officer was borne along the passages like drift upon a racing tide.

The Declaration had been read, the Resolutions had been passed. No violence could now undo that reading and that vote. But Charles could punish deeds which he had not been able to prevent; and in a week from that dramatic scene in the House of Commons, Nine of the leading members — Holles, Eliot, Selden, Hobart, Hayman, Coryton, Valentine, Strode, and Long— were prisoners in the Tower.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A KING'S REVENGE.

Two of these nine gentlemen in the Tower were soon at large — relinquished, pardoned, and despised of kings and men. Sir Allan Apsley, in whose house the prisoners lodged, was told to hold out hope of pardon to the weaker fry. He was to tell them day by day that Charles was no less merciful than just, but that his Majesty must be entreated and obeyed. If they would ask his grace, they must deserve it; asking it in humble phrase, and earning it in contrite heart. Hayman and Coryton were weaker fry. Inspired by noble fellowship, they had shot for one brief hour into a higher sphere; but silence and restraint soon chilled that patriotic glow. These men confessed their fault, agreed to sin no more, and left the Tower, to wander into empty space.

Seven gentlemen were left; seven gallant men in thought and deed. For more than

thirty weeks they lay in Apsley's charge, the court not knowing what to do. They would not bend. They stood upon the law. They looked for other Parliaments to come. At White Hall nobody could see his way. The King declared that they should either bend or break. The judges felt grave doubts in point of law. The councillors were fearful lest, in despite of Charles, another Parliament might be called. A press of gentlemen was always at the Tower—peers, knights, and burgesses—to see and cheer their champions. Apsley, rough old soldier as he was, looked grave, and more than once his prisoners' rooms were changed. Some counties sent petitions to the King, complaining that this seizure of their members was against the laws and liberties of England, as attested in the Bill of Rights. What could be done?

The King said, 'Bend or break.' Chief Justice Hyde, who wished to please the King, said, 'Let them lie in jail, as men forgotten, till their stomachs come down.' Heath could not go so far as Hyde. He knew there was no law for such a course; he held that men arrested must be brought to trial; he had seen too much of public life to dream that no more Parliaments would

meet; and, wishing to be safe, he recommended that some show of justice should be held.

The seven prisoners were then indicted and condemned. Eliot, Holles, and Valentine, were tried in the King's Bench for causing the King's subjects to withdraw their affection from him. Eliot was fined two thousand pounds, Holles a thousand marks, and Valentine five hundred pounds. All three were sentenced to imprisonment during pleasure—Eliot in the Tower, Holles and Valentine elsewhere, as his Majesty should see fit. Long, indicted in the Star-Chamber, was condemned to pay a fine of two thousand marks, and lie in the Tower till he should make submission and confession to the King. Selden and Strode, who gave the King much trouble by their applications to the courts of law for leave to put in bail, were carried to the King's Bench prison; while Hobart, last and least of these stout champions of free speech, was taken to the Gatehouse near White Hall.

And now began the weary work of misery and restraint that was to bend or break these gallant souls. The youngest, Denzil Holles, was first to fail in strength; he made some compact with the court, and went to live in his country-house.

Hobart fell next, though not before months of rust had rotted into his soul. For two years Strode and Selden lay in the King's Bench prison; varied only once or twice, in time of plague, by transfer to the Gate-house. Once, to their surprise, they were remitted to the Tower; a move on Charles's part to cross the Court of King's Bench in what he feared was a design to set them free on bail. They gained their liberty at last, by what is known to jurists as the legal process of 'escape.' A few weeks later Valentine was at large. Two prisoners yet remained; but Long was striving to obtain his pardon and release. Two years of silence, darkness, and restraint, had cowed his spirit; and he offered, in exchange for light and air, to own his fault, express his sorrow, and continue humbly at his Majesty's feet. 'Humble at last!' thought Charles; and Long, who was first removed from the Tower to Giltspur Street Compter, was soon afterwards set at large.

One prisoner now remained. 'Ringleader Eliot,' he was called by Charles—that man of swift audacities, who had visited Nutt on his pirate deck, and afterwards flamed into the Bill of Rights. Would he too bend? Would he confess his fault? Would English freedom have

to stand without a witness? Would the three great Resolutions, passed with so much fervour, fall into the ground? The King was firm, the prisoner no less firm. Submit, confess, atone, said Charles and Charles's agent. Nothing else would serve. Submit!—the prisoner could submit so far as to request his liberty and the remission of his fine. Confess!—he had no error to confess: his words were true, his acts were just. Atone!—he had no evil to undo, no utterance to unsay. He would not promise to retire from public life. The work must still go on. His last words in the House of Commons, 'Where I now leave off, I will begin again,' was his unchangeable resolve. The liberties and laws of England were at stake, and, whether he lived their champion or died their martyr, they should never perish in his hands.

Too well he knew the royal temper and the royal purpose to deceive himself, and he prepared his mind, his dungeon, and his family, for the strife. Sir Allan Apsley, doubtless by command, had lodged him in the Bloody tower; that ominous and fearful cell in which his hero Raleigh had pined for years, his poet Overbury had been done to death. This cell the prisoner

furnished with some chairs and desks, some paper, pens and ink, the necessary comforts of a captive lot. The doors then closed upon him, and that constant soul was lost for ever to the public sight.

Closed in behind those bars, he gave up most of his days to writing and his nights to prayer. In later years—and he was yet so young!—he had become devout in word and thought; sincerely bent on walking in the ways of life. A deep sense of religious duty spurred him into patriotic ardour, and his patriotic ardour passed into the reverence which he paid to God. To him the Bloody tower became a chapel, and the precinct of his prison was a holy place. A side door in his chamber led to Raleigh's Walk, from which he could look over Water Lane, the Wharf, the Thames. His window opened on the Green, the Lieutenant's garden, and the main approach. The room was cold and dark; and the portcullis, raised and lowered by chains, disturbed the prisoner's rest. Yet Eliot was a free man in the Bloody tower. He kept his 'freedom of the mind;' not, 'as a stranger,' since, 'thank God, he had never been without it in his life.' While he was strong in health he

laboured in his cell, as he had laboured in the world. Three exercises of his pen—the first of his prison studies—still survive: *De Jure Magistatis*, an *Apology for Socrates*, and *The Monarchy of Men*—three noble exercises, instinct with the love and yearning of his heart. He wrote some letters to his friends—to one dear friend, John Hampden, more than all. His two boys, John and Richard, came to see him in the Tower—came up from Hampden's house, to which they afterwards went back. John Hampden rode to town, and by contrivance with the keepers, saw his friend in the Bloody tower. The prisoner wrote to Luke, to Grenville, and to Knightly—noble friends, who shared with Hampden and with England all the treasures of his love. His letters breathe of freedom, charity, and hope. His prison was no jail to him. The cell in which he lay was near to heaven; one sky bent over all.

'No day,' he wrote, 'has seemed too long, nor night has once been tedious; nor fears, nor terrors, have affrighted me. No grief, no melancholy, has opprest me; but a continual pleasure and joy in the Almighty, has still comforted me. His power, His greatness, has secured me!' What could the highest of earthly kings effect against such a spirit?

Cold, passionless, implacable, King Charles was deaf, as Wentworth and as Laud were deaf, to that grand and mute appeal which Eliot, as a prisoner in the Tower — a prisoner for his country — offered to all noble hearts. Days, weeks, months, years, dragged on; but neither love nor fear inclined the royal heart to justice. 'Bend or break' was all he had to say; bend neck, break heart; on no less terms could he forgive.

Since Villiers fell, the Tower had been itself again. The play was over and the lights were out. A shadow fell from the arch of Traitor's Gate on coming and departing barges, just as it had fallen on such barges in preceding reigns. No clemency, in future, at the Tower! Sir Allan Apsley died, and Lady Apsley, with her little ones, removed from the Lieutenant's house. Carey, Gentleman-Porter, held the keys, as second in command. Who would succeed Sir Allan and his gentle wife? The choice of a Lieutenant would betray the King, all secret though he was. The Tower had ceased to be a name of dread; for years, no man had perished in its vaults; no life had fallen to the headsman's axe. An age had come, like that which marked the earlier years of good Queen Bess; an age not free

from strife, commitments, trials; yet in which the rage of faction paused at the point of blood. With all his faults, the Duke had never put an enemy to death. If he had sent men freely to the Tower, he had neither treated them harshly nor held them long. In such a reign Sir Allan and his gentle wife were in their place. Would some new Apsley get the dead man's post?

A ruffian, loud of tongue and fierce of clutch, was hanging on the court, whom Charles had wished to take into his pay; Sir William Balfour, that Free-lance whom he had chosen to command his mercenary guard, and light his Parliament with a sheen of halberds. Him he chose; and Balfour came to live in the Lieutenant's house.

Poor Eliot felt the shock. New rules were framed; his rooms were changed, and changed again; pen, ink, and paper, were removed from him. Men saw that Charles would either kill his prisoner or compel him to deny the truth. The room to which he was removed was cold and dark. If Balfour sent him candles, he would hardly give him fire. A cough came on; a dry, hard cough, which baffled his physicians' skill. It was the place, the air, the chill, the darkness; these were killing him, and his physicians said so.

'He must have fresh air,' they wrote; 'he will never recover of his consumption, unless he breathes a purer air.' A purer air! His room was changed again; from bad to worse; from chill to frost; from dark to black. His cough grew harder, and his voice began to fail. The man was dying; slowly done to death!

Then Balfour, bent on giving a triumph to the court, persuaded him to ask for grace; and Eliot, in his weakness, drew up a petition to the King. 'Your judges have committed me to prison in your Tower of London, where by reason of the quality of the air I am fallen into a dangerous disease, and humbly beseech your Majesty you will command your judges to set me at liberty,' he wrote. Here was no dropping of his flag, no taking back his testimony; nothing but a personal petition for his right. 'Not humble enough!' sneered Charles, throwing down his victim's prayer. The prisoner, told what the King had said, took up his pen once more. 'You must humble yourself; admit your fault, and crave his Majesty's pardon,' hissed the Lieutenant, who was standing near his desk. 'I thank you for your friendly advice,' said Eliot to the mercenary; 'my spirits are grown faint and feeble, and when it pleases God

to restore them, I will take it into my consideration.' He laid his pen down, with a patient spirit. He kept his testimony to the last. His work on earth was done; and fifteen days later he was dead.

The King's revenge was full?

Not yet.

The patriot's son applied for leave to take the body to Port Eliot, where it might be laid in the family vault. The King would not permit that pious act. 'Let him be buried where he died,' Charles wrote with his own hand upon the boy's petition; and the eloquent Witness for our Liberties was laid by his prison warder in St. Peter's Church.

Charles hoped to pile up scorn and shame on Eliot's head. He made the stones of that lowly church within the ramparts sacred for ever to the men whose rights the illustrious orator had died to save.

CHAPTER XXX.

CHARLES THE FIRST.

For more than eleven years after Eliot passed into the Tower, for more than seven years after he was laid in St. Peter's Church, no Parliament was called in England. Charles had taken to himself new councillors, who taught him to rule his country as the Bourbon ruled in France and the Austrian ruled in Spain. For these years force was right and power was law. Wentworth was the State; Laud was the Church; and Charles was God.

This Prince has always been, and always will be, one of the dreamy pets of romantic youth and credulous age. Poets and girls look up into his eyes, as they beam down from walls in Vandyke's pictures, with a yearning of the soul akin to love. What dignity, what sweetness, in the royal saint! If not in every line a King of men—for some of these lines are certainly wanting in curve and mass—no man with gift of sight can say that

Charles looks other than like a student and a Prince. Judging him from what the arts have left us, we perceive that here was a Prince, who, whether he acted well or ill, was to be adored by women, and by men who love and hate like women; for even such hard critics as would lash him heavily for what they call his craft and baseness, own that he was graced by charms beyond the reach of ordinary men. His face was fine. His smile was sorcery. His voice was low and sweet. His figure, not a bad one, was adorned with care; each point of light and shade being studied for effect from plume to spur. Each caught the eye like a work of art. In dress, in gait, in speech, his ways were perfect; in so far as such things can be governed into outward harmony by line and law. Frank, open, natural, he could not be; the school in which he had been trained forbidding him to move his hand, to part his lips, to nod his head, excepting in accordance with the rule laid down. Young, pensive, picturesque, he glided through the world, like one who was subdued by sorrow, even as he seemed to be refined by taste. Yet Charles was not all outward show. Some good there lay in him beyond his love of art. His life was pure. In days

when Kings kept harems, much as they kept kennels, he was true (in measure) to his marriage vows. At first, his French wife led him a fretful dance; but, after Bassompiere had made them kiss the kiss of peace, the King was what a husband should be; on the side of charity a little more. For all the youngsters at his knee he had a parent's fondness, and a parent's pride; at seeing which satirical lords-in-waiting would occasionally smile and turn their heads. In books he was fairly read; and of the arts he was a noble judge. Pictures and poems were his higher world, the choice companions of his silent hours; and in these happier moments of his life he fled from Coventry and Laud to gaze with wonder on Rubens' tints, and listen with delight to Shakespeare's lines.

Unless his soul were stirred by wrath, his voice was tuned to sweet and limpid chords. But when he left the field of dress and taste, of smiles and words, he was deficient on every side; in strength, in trust, in truth; in all that makes a noble man. His intellect was weak. His moral sense was dull. No love of truth as truth, no loyalty to fact as fact, sustained his life. He was not gentle, and he was not brave. But

seldom could he find the clues of right and wrong. A thing he liked was never wrong; a thing he loathed was never right. No man could trust his word; no party reckon on his pledge. A trick of settling with his conscience, day by day, grew on him; silencing the voice within by acts of self-deceiving guile. No courtly priest was ever readier to absolve a royal saint than Charles was ready to absolve himself. He could not help it. As he told himself, he meant no harm. If wicked and unfaithful men abused him, he was bound to crush them. Had he broken faith? Then he repented of his sin—in secret; and in secret he forgave himself that sin. Yet Charles was only in the higher sense, in presence of the nobler verities, a fool. He saw that 'policies' of deception' have a first success; he could not see the weakness, shame, and danger, that are sown in every violated oath.

The ministers of his choice were all unpopular and suspected men. Wentworth was a friend of Spain and no great enemy of Rome. Laud was so much a Papist that Pope Urban offered to confer on him a cardinal's hat. Finch, his Lord Chief Justice, was the most noxious creature on the bench. Windebank, whom he had

made his Secretary of State, went over to the Jesuits' church.

For seven years after Eliot's death, the land was ruled by fear and force. The lash, the stocks, the jail, were freely used. A servile bench compelled the people to accept a Laudine church. A troop of horse went forth to levy rates. The men who stood for law and right were seized by Charles, who flogged them, slit their noses, cropped their ears, and burnt their cheeks. Torn, bleeding, singed with burning irons, these patriotic men were carried from the pillory to the Gate-house, Marshalsea, and Tower.

Nine months after Eliot died, Sir William Balfour brought into the Tower a barrister of Lincoln's Inn; a scholar and polemic of the highest reach; who had alarmed and mortified Laud by making motions in the name of public justice in the courts of law. This barrister was William Prynne. A Reader and a Bencher of his Inn, profoundly versed in doctrinal theology and in canon law, he set his teeth against the policy pursued by Laud, and stayed by timely actions many of the causes which the Primate would have sent before the court of High Commission. Prynne was marked, as Eliot had been

marked; and when, in 1632, the zealous Puritan produced his 'Scourge for Stage Players,' Laud persuaded Charles that Prynne was libelling, in this famous book, his King and Queen. This Puritan spoke ill of plays; his Majesty was fond of plays; his censure was a libel on the King. The Puritan spoke ill of masques; the Queen had dawdled through a masque; his censure was a libel on the Queen. Away with such a fellow to the Tower!

Prynne's true offence was not his rage against the actors, but his hint that, under Laud's advice, the Church was being turned into a theatre, the ritual into something like a play. He spoke of the garnished altars and the church music introduced by Laud as sceneries and accessories of Rome. Laud took an eager and dishonest course. The 'Scourge' had been duly licensed by Abbott's chaplain, and was legally entitled to appear. Laud represented it to Charles as having been printed in secret, in a press well known for issuing unlawful books. The work was published six weeks before the Queen appeared in any masque. Laud showed a passage to the Queen reflecting on the frailty of female players, and suggesting that the passage was

directed against herself. By these deceptions he inflamed the court; and Prynne, who was arraigned in the Star Chamber (he and his printer, licenser, and publisher—one of them a widow), was condemned. The 'Scourge' was to be burnt. Lord Cottington, pronouncing sentence, said that, in other countries, libellous books were burnt by the common hangman. Such was not the law and use in England; but the custom was a good one; he would introduce it; and the 'Scourge' should be delivered by a common hangman to the flames. Prynne was to be deprived at Oxford, and disbarred at Lincoln's Inn. He was to stand in the pillory twice; in Cheape and Palace Yard; to have his ears sliced off, one ear in each city; to pay a fine of five thousand pounds, and to lie in prison till he died.

Abbott's chaplain was censured, fined, imprisoned; but the Primate, whom Laud and Charles desired to hurt, was past all earthly wounds. The good Archbishop was near his end; and Laud rejoiced to think that *he* was also near his end.

Laud, now Archbishop of Canterbury, had his brutal sentence brutally carried out. Prynne's ears

were cropped. Prynne's bleeding body was returned to the Tower, in which the new Lord Primate hoped he would 'lie and rot.' Prynne lay four years a prisoner; but unlike some younger men, his spirit never quailed. With pens and books, he kept himself alive, and, after four years' durance, sent from his cell in the Tower his 'News from Ipswich,' an attack on Laud.

While Prynne was lying in his cell, with no more freedom to observe what men were doing in the world than Sunday service gave him, he was edified by a scene in the little church. One Archibald Mackeller, chaplain of the Tower, was sued for payment of a bond, and lost his cause. The debt was twenty pounds; the pleadings showed that these twenty pounds were to be paid for help in getting the chaplain's place. A cry of simony arose: a second action was commenced, and judgment given; on which the King—that is to say, his ghostly adviser, Laud—deposed the simonist from his post, and made one Shipsea, chaplain of the Tower. Mackeller would not troop, and Balfour could not drive him beyond the gates—except by force, which, in a clergyman's case, he had no heart to use. Shipsea reasoned with his clerical brother; proffering him

a benefice in the country, in exchange. Mackeller would not leave the Tower, and force at length was used. Thrust out into the street, Mackeller got a joiner who was sending a coffin to the Tower to let him lie inside it, so as to pass the warders at the gate unseen. At dawn he was carted in, and set down in his coffin, with the lid nailed lightly, at St. Peter's door. A sexton came to toll the bell, unlock the door, and sweep the church. While he was tolling prisoners to their prayers, Mackeller burst from his coffin, passed into the church, and locked the congregation out. Sir William Balfour came. The chaplain would not unlock the doors. Patrols were called, the doors were forced, the simonist was seized amidst the wildest uproar, and conveyed by Balfour to a prison cell. Here, thought the Puritan barrister, was a Sunday scene in the House of God!

Laud cited Prynne, in company with John Bastwick, doctor in medicine, and Henry Burton, bachelor in divinity, to answer in the Star Chamber for their opposition to his doings in the Church. Prynne tendered a cross bill, charging the Primate with usurping royal power, with bringing in new rites, and giving his license to Popish books. Coventry refused his bill. Laud, who sat

in the Star Chamber, not as accuser only, but as judge, requested that the prisoner might be punished as a libeller, for tendering such a bill; but Coventry, who was a lawyer, told his Grace, that though Prynne's application was refused, his bill had been tendered to the court in legal form. But Finch was more complaisant to the Primate. Bastwick, Prynne, and Burton, were accused by Laud of wishing to change the constitution in Church and State; and all the three were sentenced by Finch to lose their ears, to stand in the pillory at Palace Yard, to pay a fine of five thousand pounds each, and to be imprisoned during life in three distant castles—Carnarvon, Cornwall, Lancaster. As Prynne had no second pair of ears to lose, Finch ordered that the roots of his ears should be sliced away, and both his cheeks burnt deeply with the letters S and L. (seditious libeller). But Finch took nothing, Laud not much, by this brutal deed. The pillory-yard became a court; the scaffolds were likened to the three crosses on Mount Calvary; and when the prisoners were removed from London, scourged and seared, great multitudes of people marched with them along the roads, to comfort them with psalms and prayers.

A concourse gathered in Carnarvon, to salute the barrister, that frightened Laud into breaking the law still further, by removing him to the Isle of Jersey, where he lay a prisoner in Mont Orgueil Castle, until Finch, and Laud, and Wentworth, had accomplished all the evil they were born to do on earth.

As Prynne came forth from the Tower, a man more hateful and more dangerous to Laud came in to occupy his place,—my Lord of Lincoln, who had now given up his dream of wearing a Lord Cardinal's hat. Driven from court by Laud, the pluralist had tried the northern wolds; much riding, racing, dining, and baronial splendour; but the days grew long upon his head; he saw the errors into which his Majesty was falling; and he felt that sooner or later Charles would find a scapegoat in his Primate Laud. What then? The spiritual throne of England would be vacant. Then . . . ?

Too well aware of his lordship's daring, Laud set on his agents to entrap him into some offence. Williams was free of tongue, and Laud's first accusation charged him with spreading tales and news against his Majesty's government, and revealing matters which were only known to him as a

councillor, contrary to his service and his oath. But this was not enough. A second charge was founded on proceedings taken on the first. Williams was accused by Laud of tampering with the witnesses, of telling them what to swear and what to cloak. The Dean of the Arches testified that Williams had said to him, 'What kind of people are these Puritans whom you complain of; do they subscribe the Loan?' To which the Dean replied, 'They pay their money, but are not conformable to the Church.' On which the Bishop answered, 'If they pay their money readily, they are the King's best subjects, and will carry all at last!' To be accused by Laud was to be guilty; and the Star Chamber sentenced Williams to be fined ten thousand pounds, to be deprived of his income, to be suspended in his office, to be imprisoned during pleasure of the King. A hint was given him that his fate might turn on money. Could he be persuaded to resign his see, together with that deanery of Westminster which he also held? If so, he might obtain his liberty from the Tower, and a bishopric in the Irish Church. He would not listen; it was hard, he said, to defend himself against Laud in England; if he crossed over to Ireland, the Lord Lieutenant,

Wentworth, would shave his head off in a month.

For three years and six months Bishop Williams lay a prisoner in that Tower, to which, in his days of greatness, he had sent so many of his scapegoats, while the Primate Laud was running to his fearful end. He was himself a scapegoat now. For three years and a half he only heard from spies and servants what was doing in the world; but all that dreary time he never ceased to pray most loyally that a Parliament might come.

CHAPTER XXXI.

PILLARS OF STATE AND CHURCH.

THAT Parliament for which so many prisoners prayed, with higher faith in prayer than Williams felt, was come at last, and with it fell the two stout pillars of the State and Church.

Thomas Wentworth, now become Baron Raby, Viscount Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, was the chief enigma in the reign of Charles the First. This Yorkshireman was born of patriot stock; he had a liberal tutor; he was carried into Parliament by liberal votes; he married twice into liberal houses; he was recognised by liberals as a leader in the House of Commons; he was hated and denounced at court as dangerous; once, at least, he refused to subscribe the loan; he was imprisoned in the Marshalsea; he stood in front of the attack on Buckingham; and then, by what his comrades called an act of treachery, he passed to the other side; became a courtier and a councillor

of Charles; accepted honours from the King, and took in temporal things that chief direction of affairs which Laud had recently assumed in spiritual things. What caused this change? Ambition—love—revenge?

Most people said the first. Proud, passionate, and rich, Sir Thomas Wentworth, baronet, of Wentworth Woodhouse, found a superior to himself in influence, even on his Yorkshire moors, and on the popular side, in Sir John Savile, of Hadley, who contested the county with him, and assumed to be the principal mouthpiece in Parliament of the Yorkshire folk. Wentworth's sister, who had married into the Savile family, was left a widow, with two infant sons; and family jars about her settlements were added to the proud man's list of wrongs. Savile had passed from the popular to the courtly side as Baron Savile, of Pontefract; and from whatever course he fell, Sir Thomas Wentworth quickly followed this Yorkshire rival to the House of Lords.

Some people said the force which drew him to the side of Charles was love. A beautiful and charming woman, Arabella, daughter of the Earl of Clare, was Wentworth's second wife; and yet the Countess of Carlisle—that Lady Lucy,

who had lighted with her gaieties the Martin tower—entangled his affections, drew him from his home, and led him into devilries and indecorums ill consorting with his years, his health, and state. This lovely creature, whom the poets gifted with more charms than ever met in woman, and whose vanity it was to fall in love with every man of mark, from Pym to Wentworth, was a Royalist, and the wife of Lord Carlisle, the reigning favourite now that Buckingham was gone. She lured him to the court, and many thought she led him to betray his ancient cause and early friends.

Some people counted it revenge. The same bright woman was a friend of Wentworth and of Pym, and Pym was said to be the man more favoured of the two. Wentworth, mad with jealousy, is thought to have left the popular side in order to seek an opportunity for revenge on his successful rival in that lady's heart. His pride was flattered to the full; his patent of nobility set forth his pedigree up to John of Gaunt; connecting him in a public document with the royal blood.

Yet Wentworth's course was less erratic than it looks. The man was born a despot, like his shireman Calvert; and in foreign travel he had

learned to think that Liberty was a thing worn out and soon to pass away. In Spain the old municipal franchises were gone; in France the parliamentary rights were crushed; in Germany the Empire was encroaching on those minor states in which some sparks of popular life survived. The Pope, supported by the Jesuits, was extending and enforcing his traditional power. In England there was much dispute and some despair; the crown disposed to follow in the wake of France and Spain; the people bent on holding to their ancient rights. By nature he was with the despots, since he hated popular and divided counsels, and was conscious of the power to reign and rule. Mere accidents of birth and schooling threw him on the popular side, but he had no belief in popular success, and for himself he was determined to succeed. Not once, but many times, he tried to win the royal ear. He had a secret to impart. He knew the use and the abuse of speech; and he could show the King a way to live and rule. His rise was slow, but from his early youth he threw himself upon the court. At twenty-six he held a seat in the presidency of York, a most unpopular and unlawful board. At twenty-seven he brought in Calvert

for his county, on a promise (which was broken) that he should be made a peer. He was a partisan of the Spanish match, and clung to the policy of seeking allies in the kings of Spain. Once only he was false to nature and conviction; when, chagrined by ill success at court, he wished to let the King observe how surely he could launch the thunderbolts of war. He played his game, and won his stake.

No mist of doubt hangs over the conditions on which he came to favour. Wentworth was to carry out Charles' views of regal power. Williams had proposed to insert a 'saving clause' in the Bill of Rights. Wentworth was prepared to burn that Bill. He was to take his law from Finch, and men like Finch. He offered to lock the doors of Parliament-house and throw the keys into the Thames. He undertook to cow the judges and to clear the bench. To quote his words, he was prepared to 'vindicate the monarchy for ever from under the conditions and restraints of subjects.' Give him power, and then the King should govern like a King, the liege should pay obedience like a liege. No man should raise his voice against the court, and Charles should stand to his people in the place of God.

Wentworth was now employed, and soon gave proof of his capacity to govern. Sworn of the Privy Council, he was sent to York as Lord President of the North, to keep down popular demands for due observance of the Bill of Rights; a lawless office, which he executed with despotic sway against the views and protests of the bench. From York he went to Dublin as Lord Deputy of Ireland; where he shocked the well-worn English of the Pale by his amazing words and his despotic acts. He put down protests with a haughty gesture. Talk to him of law! Your laws were words, wind, parchment, dust. No vital force in all your rolls and records! He, a man of force, could pay no heed to scrawls. He treated the Irish judges like so many boys at school. Williams was right in preferring his cell in the Tower to a bishopric in Ireland, for the new Lord Deputy was assuredly capable of having his head off in a month.

Laud's course, though it appeared to be less abrupt than Wentworth's, was in no degree less servile. From the first this preacher of the Gospel of Kings and Bishops, had set himself to serve great people, and to push his way through right and wrong to power. As chaplain to Lord De-

vonshire, he had lent himself to an irregular, uncanonical marriage of his patron to Lady Rich; but when Laud offended God and holy Church to please his patrons, Devonshire was a leading man, and Lady Rich a leading woman at the court. So soon as these great folk were questioned for their sin, Laud's conscience had begun to prick him; and when James denounced him for compliance, he was stricken into agonies of self-reproach. His hope of rising in the world seemed wrecked, and never till his dying hour could he forgive himself that lapse from virtue for a patron's gain. For years he made no progress in the Church, although he found a second and a safer patron in Bishop Neile, whose Romanising views he had supported and outdone. Neile gave him a prebend's stall; but years elapsed ere James would make him Chaplain; still more years ere he would make him Dean. But Laud had sought the Parent as a means of getting at her son, and found her in the moment of her wrath with her adorer, Eunuch John. Soft, servile, and loquacious, Laud enchained this woman with his 'hocus-pocus.' She was quarrelling with her preachers as too popular; and Laud's willingness to confer with Father Fisher, now become her

spiritual guide, induced her to support him, as a clergyman who was willing to allow the Pope his due. From that hour Hocus-pocus—as the cynics called him—was the leading personage in the Church.

He tried to get the Deanery of Westminster from Williams, but the pluralist would not yield his place. He got the mitres of St. David's, Bath and Wells, and London; and when Abbott died he passed to Canterbury, where his Popish views were so pronounced that he received from Rome the offer of a cardinal's hat.

For seven long years Laud persecuted every man in the Church who differed from his views on candles, copes, and stoles. He preached the gospel of obedience to the King, of looking to the Church for light, of leaving public matters to public men; and, more than all, of lending money to the royal house. If any one protested, in his looks or speech, against these gospels, Laud indicted him in the Star Chamber, where, on proof being tendered, he was sentenced to be whipped at a cart-tail, to stand in a pillory, to have his nostrils slit, his ears cropped off, and his forehead burnt. A hundred gentlemen, no less learned and respectable than

Prynne, were mutilated, lashed, and singed like Prynne.

If people wagged their tongues against such doings, Laud was ready with his answers to complaints—troops, cannon, suits of law, and lengths of rope. A paper, posted on the City gates, invited the 'prentice lads to come to Lambeth on a certain day, and pull the Primate's house about his ears. Laud sent for men and guns; and, when some lads came up at the appointed hour, he quickly drove them off with shot, and went to dinner thanking God that all was well. A cobbler was the chief of these 'rascal routers,' and this cobbler he condemned to death. By help of Windebank and Finch these rascals should be made to see that frightening a Lord Primate was a capital crime.

But English folk are slow to learn such lessons, even from such holy men as Laud. Before the case was tried, they gathered round the prison-gates, in which the cobbler, not yet tried, was lodged. They broke into the King's Bench, and into the White Lion, and set a number of 'the rascals' free. The government could do nothing, for the King and Wentworth were in York, with all the musters they could raise, to check a popular inroad of the Scots.

A swift irruption of the Scots had brought the deluge. Wentworth, moving with a gallant army on these Scots, had found that troops like his are apt to have opinions of their own. 'A Bishops' war,' 'a Surplice war,' these troopers called that march into the north. They cheered the Puritan divines; they broke into the Laudine vestries; and they pitched all Popish furniture into ponds. Some officers tried to bring these gospellers to reason, and these gospellers shot such officers through the head. They would not kill the Scots to set up Laud. At York the King and his Lord Deputy heard this news—an English army falling back, a Scottish army coming on. What could they do to save the kingdom? 'Call a Parliament,' said the peers; 'A Parliament,' said the towns. In bitter mood the King gave way, for Parliament was the reign of law. But force had failed him when he called for force; and now his only chance of living was a frank reversal of his policy, a full surrender of his power. Had Charles the vision of a seer?

Swift answer to such question came. A Parliament was hardly met before his Secretary

Windebank was a fugitive in Calais; his Lord-Keeper Finch a fugitive at the Hague; his Lord Deputy Wentworth and Lord Primate Laud were Balfour's prisoners in the Tower.

CHAPTER XXXII.

END OF WENTWORTH.

WILLIAMS was lying in the Tower, a prisoner, when the Houses met. A short petition, praying their lordships' leave to take his seat, was read and voted, much to Laud's dismay, who saw in such a courtesy to his victim something like a challenge to himself. But Williams, as a sufferer, was a popular man; and Charles, instructed by Lord Arundel's case, avoided fresh disasters by at once submitting to the mandates of that House. On filing to his seat, the Bishop met his enemies, Laud and Wentworth, face to face; and every one expected he would flash out into speech against them. They were much mistaken. Williams took a calm and moderate course; now siding with the Deputy and Primate in their struggles, backing his peers in their resistance to impeachment; afterwards voting with the courtiers in their efforts to resist the factions; until Charles, attracted by

what seemed his wisdom and his softness, noted that this able and zealous Bishop was a man who might be sent for in his time of need.

The popular party, led by Pym and Holles, broke upon the courtiers like an army in the field. Finch, Windebank, Wentworth, Laud, and others were assailed at once. The weapon of attack—Impeachment—had been tried in Buckingham's interest, and the Commons were disposed to use all instruments in destroying ministers and judges whom the ordinary laws could not have reached. They knew that these proceedings were illegal, in the stricter sense; but they were not to be misled by phrases; and they took their stand on what they had come to see was a state of war.

Wentworth, as the greatest of their enemies, was the first laid up. It was a question whether Pym would get his heel on Wentworth, or the Earl would get his heel on Pym. Had Charles been bold enough, the Parliament would have been dissolved and Wentworth saved; but Charles was nerveless, wavering, false. He yielded to the House, and Wentworth, lodged in the Lieutenant's rooms, was quickly tried, convicted as a 'public enemy,' and condemned to die.

Windebank's turn came next. This Secretary

of State, with no one talent for his office save unlimited deference to the will of Laud, was charged with the offence of pardoning and protecting priests. Unable to withstand the evidence, he fled the country, landed in France, and wrote a base apology for his life, in which he ventured to deny—in face of a thousand facts—that he had ever abandoned the English Church.

Then Finch was struck. A short debate sufficed to fix the articles against him. He was judged 'a public enemy,' and an order to impeach him in the House of Lords was drawn. He had a night to think what he would say in answer; and the morning found him in a strange disguise, a fugitive, on his way to Holland; where he lived in opulence for years, awaiting the return of better times for men of his peculiar class.

Laud's case came next. The Primate strove against his fate, for even after Wentworth's fall he could not fancy that his peers would give him up—a holy man, most reverend, holding office 'by Divine Providence,' as spiritual head of the English Church. Black Rod awoke him from his dream. Black Rod—Sir James Maxwell—came to arrest him by an order from the House of Commons. He was not to bear him to a prison,

but to hold him in safe custody till he purged his fame. Laud took advantage of this weakness. Could he not go to Lambeth for an hour? He wanted papers for his answer—one or two books and such small things. Black Rod went with him in a barge, and Laud secured his 'Diary,' a mass of private papers, and the Service-book which he had tried to force upon the Scots.

Ten weeks he lay in Maxwell's house; a prisoner in a garden, with his chaplains, butlers, cooks on duty, and the Church administration at his back. At length an order came for his removal to the Tower, and either a Eunuch's cunning or a sense of justice fixed his lodging in the cell which Williams tenanted so long. But Laud objected to these lodgings as 'unfit for an Archbishop,' and sent to ask Balfour to prepare apartments for him more in keeping with his rank. The purpose was not pressed, and rooms were furnished for him in the Lieutenant's house; a suite of rooms, with cabinet and antechamber, having open casemates, giving on the green. Wentworth had been removed to 'a prison lodging'—seemingly to the Bloody tower; but though the Lord Deputy's room and the Lord Primate's rooms were near each other, no com-

munication was allowed between them, saving only such as passed through friendly bishops who were sent to visit them as spiritual guides.

Although condemned to die, the Earl could not be put to death unless the King would sign a warrant for his death; and such a warrant Wentworth felt assured no power on earth could ever bring his Majesty to sign. Though he had served the King so long, he hardly knew him yet. So soon as cries for Wentworth's blood were raised, his Majesty began to fear and waver in his fear. He tried to soften Pym, but found that Pym was rock. He begged his servant's life, but was refused the boon. He stooped to ask for leave to exercise that gift of mercy which in legal times could not be separated from his crown. The Commons would not yield, for legal times were past. All law was set aside when Charles, at Wentworth's motion, had suspended the Bill of Rights. What more could Charles attempt? His army would not fight; an enemy was encamped upon his soil; his guards were overawed; the city bands were threatening; and the streets were loud for blood. He was alone; the men on whom he leaned in days gone by were not behind him. Windebank was in Calais, Finch was at the

Hague, and Laud was in the Lieutenant's house. Where could he turn for counsel? Then he thought of that much-suffering prelate who had lain in the Tower so long, and yet on his release had shown no bitterness against his foes. He sent for Williams:—the Lord Deputy's fate was sealed. With sleek and tender guile the pluralist touched the King; alarmed him for his personal safety; and suggested that a scapegoat must be made of the unhappy Earl. The state of his affairs required a sacrifice; a sacrifice as great as the occasion; and the blood of Wentworth only could suffice. No power on earth could save him;—let him perish as a scapegoat for the King!

Charles heard, and signed.

Wentworth learned that he must die with lofty, uncomplaining scorn. He asked for three days' grace, in which to settle his affairs; but Pym would not consent to spare him for an hour. The tyrant's head must fall, and fall as had been fixed. 'We ought to have a coach, my lord,' urged Balfour, when the morning came. 'A coach!' exclaimed the Earl, 'for what?' 'For safety,' answered the Lieutenant; for the surge outside was great; the people were excited, and that officer was afraid the throng would push aside his

guard, and tear the despotic noble limb from limb. 'No, Master Lieutenant,' said the livid and contemptuous Earl, 'I can look death in the face, and the people too. I care not how I die—whether by the hand of the executioner or by the madness of the people. It is all one to me!'

As he came out to execution, attended by the Earl of Newport, Constable of the Tower, the Primate of Armagh, the Earl of Cleveland, and a train of gentlemen, he paused beneath Laud's window and looked up. Some days before, the Primate of Armagh had carried a request from him to Laud, desiring Laud to stand at the open casement as he passed, and give him a final blessing on his road to death. On seeing Laud, the Earl stood still a moment; bowed with holy reverence, and exclaimed, 'My lord, your prayers, your blessing!' Laud held up his hands, in act to bless; but either fear or feeling overcame him, and he swooned, and fell into his attendant's arms. 'Farewell, my lord,' said Wentworth, turning towards the archway of the Bloody tower, 'and may God protect your innocency.' Then the halberdiers resumed their march.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LAUD'S LAST TROUBLES.

ALONE in the Lieutenant's house, with secretaries, cooks and butlers, Laud began to write, as prisoners in the Tower are apt to do; continuing his 'Diary' in briefest notes, and jotting down a History of his Troubles more in full. A year passed by. His enemies were busy; and for months he seemed to be 'forgotten' in the Tower.

One chance was offered to the King by Williams to preserve his crown, by calling to his aid such men as held the public ear. This was 'a policy of deception' also, on a larger scale and a more dangerous field. But Charles was playing as a gambler plays the hour before he flings away his life. Lyttleton, the foe of Villiers and the friend of Selden, got the Seals. St. John, who had spoken against ship-money, was appointed Solicitor-general. Bedford, Pym, and others were invited to take office, and the Eunuch was promoted to the see of York.

These changes brought no comfort to the prisoner in the Tower. His dainties were abridged; his jailers proved less pliant; and his household was reduced. Low people were allowed to hiss him; and his grants of livings in his province were constrained. But worse was soon to come. His grace of York, now powerful in the closet and the House of Lords, procured from Charles a sequestration of the Primate's powers. Laud was not brought to trial; for the popular chiefs were doubtful whether treason could be proved against him; and it suited Williams to postpone his sentence till he felt more certain of being able to secure his seat. While Laud was in the Tower untried, the actual primacy of England lay in the see of York. But short of being tried and punished, Laud could be made to suffer both in person and in purse. His plate, his books, his armour, his furniture, were seized at Lambeth, Croydon, and elsewhere. The guns which he had used against the 'rascal routers' were removed from Lambeth to the Tower. Each day his servants brought him some bad news. He was to be arraigned for treason to the State; he was to be transported beyond the seas; he was to pass the remnant of his days at Plymouth Rock.

The newest policy of deception also failed, and Williams, as its author, was in no long time a prisoner in the Tower a second time. Pym would not join the court; the Earl of Bedford died; and Lyttleton and St. John, though accepting office, threw their energies into the Good Old Cause. The revolution grew apace. A motion was proposed to put the Bishops out of Parliament; on which his Grace of York, with sundry of his brethren, drew up an address, asserting that all acts promoted in their absence would be null and void. For this offence his Grace of York, and all the prelates who had signed his protest, were committed to the Tower.

For eighteen weeks, the Archbishop and his brethren lay in prison; begging pardon when they found that hectoring would not do; and going out, on due submission and repentance, not as lords of Parliament, but as simple ministers of God.

In the Lieutenant's house, the two Archbishops met at table: yokemen of the time and prisoners of the Church. His Grace of Canterbury forgave his Grace of York; his Grace of York shook hands with his Grace of Canterbury; and then the two Archbishops parted on Balfour's stair, to meet no more on earth, profoundly igno-

rant of each other's better side. York carried his policy to another field, while Canterbury was left in the Tower to wait and watch events; events which were to guide his fortune and control his life.

To try the Primate of all England as a public enemy, even though he were called Pope Laud, was one of those high and fatal acts from which the consciences of people shrank. Such spectral shapes as Bastwick, Prynne, and Burton—with their nostrils slit, their foreheads burnt, their ears cropped off—might yell and shriek for blood; but men who had not suffered from the knife, the shears, the branding-irons, were content to hiss and curse, and leave Lord Hocus-Pocus in his lonely cell. Much fighting in the open field, wide waste of burning towns and slaughtered saints, were wanting, ere the public ire could flame into consuming heat. But soon this waste of fire and death set in. Unable to pursue his policy of deceit, the King attempted to arrest the popular members—failed—left London secretly—collected his adherents—fought at Edgehill, Brentford, Newbury, Nantwich, Marston Moor; each battle bringing his Archbishop nearer to the tragic end.

Charles' flight from London threw the Tower into citizen hands. Sir Isaac Pennington, Lord Mayor, replaced Sir William Balfour as Lieutenant of the Tower. The Puritans were masters now, and Laud, though sorely tried by these events, was forced to close his ear and keep his choler down. The warders treated him with less respect; the chaplains turned their texts against him. Parson Joscelyn, preaching at St. Peter's church, abused him till the boys and women rose, and stared at him, to note how he would bear such 'malice.' Parson Kem was harder to endure than Parson Joscelyn. Kem was the Captain of a troop of horse, who preached and fought with equal fire. He only knew one duty—that of smiting hip and thigh. He stood there for the good old cause, the cause of holiness, of liberty, of God. To fight for it was instant gain; to die for it eternal life. The Primate could not hear such stuff with patience. Worse than all, the House of Commons, careless of his dignity and dinners, took away his serving-men, excepting only three—two servants and a keeper. He petitioned for two more, a butler and a cook.

When Reading fell, he was removed from the Lieutenant's house to 'a prison lodging:'—which

appears to have been the Bloody tower. His keeper, too, was changed, and his establishment still more reduced in size.

One day, while fretting under these new miseries, he saw, on waking from his sleep, a spectre in the door-way of his cell; a man in shape, but with the image of his Maker seared and slashed; a tall, dark thing with branded cheeks, slit nostrils, shorn-off ears, and lacerated jaw. That spectre near his bed was William Prynne! The famous scholar, burnt, hacked, cropped by Laud, had come from Jersey, like a ghost; come back to track his foe, to fasten on his flesh, and never quit him more till he should see that blotched and purple face roll white beneath the headsman's axe. Prynne held a warrant in his hand; a warrant such as Laud had often signed, to search for papers. Laud rose up in bed; but Prynne had seized the Archbishop's clothes, and turned his pockets inside out. Some books, some papers, were discovered in his rooms—his 'Diary,' his Scottish 'Service-book,' his correspondence with the King—in all some twenty bundles. These were tied together, and, in spite of Laud's remonstrance, carried off by Prynne.

With all these treasures in his desk, Prynne

fell to work. He thirsted for the Primate's blood, but he had mountains to remove ere he could count on his revenge. He had to reconcile men's minds to taking an Archbishop's life. Once only had a deed so strange been done; and Cranmer's blood still lay, a heavy weight, upon the consciences of men. Before the world would listen to him, Prynne must prove that Laud was base in heart as he was weak in brain; as false to God as he was harsh to man. He had to show that Laud, an enemy to the Commonwealth, was also an apostate from the Church. The 'Diary' which he seized in the Tower became his armoury of facts; for in that self-recording 'Diary' of a life, he found such weakness, arrogance, servility, and baseness put in evidence as his vast and various reading could not match. *A Breviate of the Life of Laud* gave all this evidence to the world, with added sting and poison from his pitiless hate. But not until the fierce encounter of Marston Moor, were people so far roused by passion as to see a Primate of all England tried, condemned, and put to death.

Laud's trial lasted long, and he was not cut off till four years after he had fainted at the sight of Wentworth on his way to rest. These four

years brought more prisoners to the Tower; men of all parties and opinions; Sir Thomas Bedingfield, Sir Kenelm Digby, the two Hothams, young Lord Digby, Sir Richard Gurney, lord mayor, Colonel Hutchinson, Monk, Sir Harry Vane; but all these prisoners came and went, while Laud was left in the Tower to struggle with his fate and vampire Prynne. At length his 'troubles' ceased, and he prepared for death. He made a decent end, as most men do when they are forced to die. Some people said, as he came forth, that he had painted his face that morning purple; but the standers-by were hushed into sudden awe on seeing that purple face turn ghastly white; and then the softer portion of the crowd sighed, 'Lord, have mercy on his soul!'

Four years again flew past, and a more solemn scene took place. From Marston Moor to Naseby was a step. Then followed Holmby, Hampton Court, and Carisbrook, High Court of Justice, and the scaffold at White Hall.

Another year, and Williams also closed his policies of deceptions. When he left the Tower he rode to Conway Castle, which he strengthened with guns and men, as a secure retreat for an Archbishop in distress. He rode to Oxford, where

he told his Majesty he must either buy up Cromwell or have him taken off. Not finding that his 'policy' was welcome, he retired to Conway Castle, which he held for Charles, so long as Charles could help him; afterwards for Parliament, while Parliament had the upper hand. His Grace of York was always on the winning side. He wrote to Cromwell, whom he had vainly urged the King to either buy or murder, claiming help and kinship. But while writing to the Lord Protector, he was whispering to his chosen friends that his poor old heart was breaking for his exiled Prince. And so, successful and deceitful to the last, the Eunuch lived and died.

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